

ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE

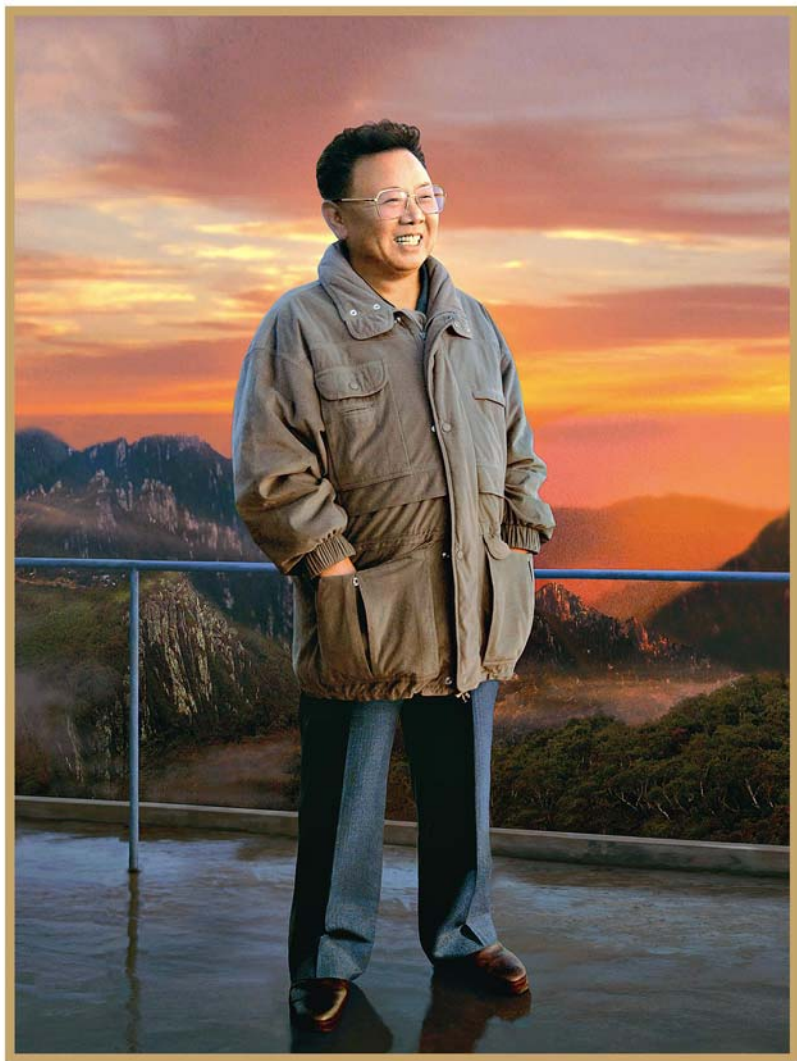
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ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE

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**At the construction site of the Samsu Power Station
(March 3, 2006)**





**At the Migok Cooperative Farm in Sariwon
(December 3, 2006)**



At the Ryongsong Machine Complex (November 12, 2006)

In a fish farm at
Lake Jangyon
(February 6, 2007)





At the Kosan Fruit Farm (May 4, 2008)





**At the goat farm on the Phyongphung Tableland
in Hamju County (August 7, 2008)**





**With a newly-wed couple of discharged soldiers
at the Wonsan Youth Power Station (January 5, 2009)**



At the Pobun Hermitage in Mt. Ryongak (January 17, 2009)



**At the Kumjintang Kuchang Youth Power Station
(November 6, 2009)**



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1. AFFECTION AND TRUST

“Crying Faces Are Not Photogenic”

On March 12, 1976, Kim Jong Il enjoyed the presentation of works by the first graduates of Pyongyang Acrobatics School.

While seeing the works one by one, he said that the graduates were more skilful than the professional acrobats.

An official suggested that he see other works on another occasion, saying that lunchtime was approaching.

Kim Jong Il said the young acrobats were performing stunts so skilfully that he was not aware of the time passing. He told them to go on.

Presently, three persons began to swing in the air, displaying beautiful and elegant movements.

Kim Jong Il saw that it was a new work and applauded before anybody else, saying that the three persons were moving like one and they looked like triplets.

After watching the presentation, Kim Jong Il gave instructions on the development of the Juche-based acrobatics.

When he was about to leave the place, the students rushed to him, and asked him to do them a favour.

Smiling, he asked them what the favour could be.

“We want to pose for a photo with you as a memento of graduation.”

“Yes, let’s. We should have a photo taken on this happy and meaningful day. Please.”

So pleased, the students could not suppress the welling tears.

Kim Jong Il said, stroking their shoulders, **“Well, stop crying and come on here. Crying faces are not photogenic.”**

Soothing them, he said again, **“First by a black and white film and then by a colour film.”**

Before leaving, he said that they should give an additional touching to their works and so they could stage a performance in front of President Kim Il Sung to show him the wonderful skills of the acrobats of a new generation.

Laughter in an Amusement Park

On October 2, 1977, Kim Jong Il visited the newly built Taesongsan Amusement Park.

After looking at the park for a good while, he said with satisfaction that the park had been built so excellently that the people of Pyongyang, including children, would love it.

Then he looked round every amusement facility.

Presently, dusk began to settle, cold autumn wind blew at the ancient fort on Mt. Taesong, and officials asked him several times to take leave.

Kim Jong Il said:

“How can we open the amusement facilities to our children without any hesitation when we have not seen them even once?

“We may not come here often, so let’s look round all of them though we may be late.”

Then he asked what was the next amusement facility, and led the officials there.

The next one was Mad Mouse.

Kim Jong Il walked to it and was getting on it, when officials hurriedly approached him and said he must not try as it was already dark.

Kim Jong Il asked the officials if there was anyone who had tried the Mad Mouse.

No one could answer.

Still smiling, Kim Jong Il said: Our people will enjoy themselves on this facility, so I have to try it. So don't worry. And it will not be dreadful when one rides it in the dark.

When the facility carrying Kim Jong Il arrived at the terminal, the officials, who were watching him with apprehension, rushed to him.

Getting off the facility, Kim Jong Il said: The elderly who would be here with their grandchildren would feel frightened to see the facility which dashes here and there in the air, saying to the grandchildren, "No, there might be an accident." But if they knew that we had tried it, they would say, "Yes, please try."

He then burst out laughing.

Officials around him, too, joined in the laughter.

Choe Hyon's Pistol

Officials in the sector of administration of the relics associated with the history of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary activities learned that Choe Hyon, who had fought the anti-Japanese armed struggle together with Kim Il Sung, had a pistol from the days of the struggle.

They went to the veteran fighter and asked him to donate the pistol, saying that it was essential for educating the coming generations.

Choe Hyon roared, "What? The other day you cajoled me into donating my amber pipe, and today you are asking for my one and only pistol? No. Don't ever dream about it."

The amber pipe was the one Kim Il Sung had given him as a gift in the days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

At their fifth visit, Choe Hyon said at last, "I can't help it. Take it with you."

Taking with a shaking hand the pistol from a safe, he looked at it and felt it with the other hand for long.

“Take it. This is my last asset. I hope that it will be of help in educating the younger generations.”

Apparently unable to see the pistol going into other’s bag, he turned his sad face away.

Kim Jong Il learned about it later. He remembered how the veteran had slept with his head on the wooden case of a pistol when the latter visited his home immediately after the liberation of the country.

At that time, he had asked, **“Why do you sleep on the wooden case, not a pillow?”**

“It’s my long-standing habit. When young, I slept on a wooden pillow and as a guerrilla, on a rifle or pistol. The pistol still gives me comfort in my sleep.”

“You don’t need to stick to the habit any more now that the country was liberated, do you?”

“You are wrong. As you know, Korea was liberated, yet being divided along the 38th Parallel, and traitorous Syngman Rhee urges his south Korean army to conquer the north. Probably, I am not destined for a sound sleep on a pillow.”

Veteran who sleeps on a wooden pistol case—this was Choe Hyon’s nickname. He must have felt so wistful about his darling, long companion he had to give up.

Kim Jong Il summoned an official, to whom he told the above story.

He said to the official:

“I think it is right to return the pistol to Choe Hyon.

“Go and tell him that I sent you to convey my thanks for his contribution to the education of the younger generations. Assure him that you are giving the pistol back as the Party has decided to defer the display of such relics as his pistol.”

“I understand, sir. But you know he gives up anything of his for others’ sake if he is so minded. I am afraid if he would be willing to take it back.”

“Tell him that I, his junior revolutionary comrade, am sending it back to him as a token of my belief that he would devote the rest of his life to the strengthening of our revolutionary armed forces.

“Then he will surely accept it.”

Days later, the official took the pistol with him to Choe Hyon. Opening the wooden case, the veteran eyed the pistol in it with surprise.

“This is my pistol.”

“No.”

“Yes, it is.”

“You donated it before, so this is a new one from the Party.”

“Oh, you are reasonable.”

The official told the veteran what Kim Jong Il had said with regard to the pistol.

Seeing the pistol, once belonging to his property but now taking on a new meaning, Choe Hyon felt grateful to Kim Jong Il.

Before Working Out the Budget

On February 24, 1980, Kim Jong Il visited the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital which was nearing completion.

After looking round the building, he said:

“Pyongyang Maternity Hospital looks excellent.

“It was long ago that President Kim Il Sung said that a modern maternity hospital should be built in Pyongyang.

“Sorry to say, the project was delayed until recently. So the Party decided to take charge of it.”

Before the onset of construction the officials concerned came up with a design of a building with 500 beds. They presumed that it was up to a world standard, as a maternity hospital in Europe noted for its size had approximately 450 beds.

500 beds—this seemed a considerable number for the officials.

However, Kim Jong Il advised that the hospital should have no less than 1 500 beds, 1 000 for mothers and 500 for babies.

The officials told him that to increase the number of beds they should add a corresponding number of incubators to the import list and it would exceed the foreign-exchange budget. They argued that the planned number would be sufficient for the babies, premature and immature, to be born at the hospital.

But Kim Jong Il insisted:

No. We should buy more. We have not spared money for the good of children.

We should consider everything necessary in equipping the maternity hospital adequately, before working out the budget.

The import list was revised immediately.

Later, measures were taken to import thousands of sophisticated equipment including the huge number of pricey incubators.

Among them was one as expensive as dozens of deluxe cars, which was likely to be switched on once or twice a year as it was used for diagnosing rare diseases.

Turning “100m Beauty” into “Real Beauty”

On August 13, 1981, Kim Jong Il visited the Ice Rink under construction, where workers were putting finishing touches on its interior.

Outside, he was beaming at the crown-shaped roof and the leaning pillars that resembled rocket launching pads. As he was walking into the building, his smile faded at the sight of the conical ceiling that was decorated with layers of galvanized iron strips.

The officials in his company stood perplexed, as this was a new, bold design, compared with iron lattice decorations at the indoor stadiums of foreign countries.

Kim Jong Il commented that it was not good to ornament both the outer walls and the conical ceiling with iron strips, suggesting that fluorescent lamps be hanged at the centre of the ceiling in the form of sunbeams.

He went on: I am not happy with the entrance that looks like the one at a guesthouse. Through the door people are to come and go in a steady stream and it will not last long. It is wrong to coat the walls within and without in the same fashion. It seems that the walls were pebble-dashed as it is an easier way than levelling their surfaces after plastering. The officials have a wrong viewpoint. Figure skating is a luxury sport, so the skating rink should look like a theatre. You should ornament even a hall of the rink with extreme care. It is ludicrous to use iron strips and the same coating material for the purpose of decoration and make those walls look alike.

The officials were impressed by his incisive remarks about the details of the building and their shortcomings.

Pointing out that the inner walls and the tiled floor should be remade, he continued:

The Ice Rink looks like a “100m beauty.” This means that it looks good from afar but ugly from nearby.

As it stands now, the rink is not ready for inauguration. It is not a private facility but is for public service. We should build it with utmost care.

Soon followed the refashioning work.

Afterwards, during his next visit, Kim Jong Il remarked with satisfaction that the rink was immaculate in every aspect to be opened to the people.

The Root Never to Be Forgotten

On November 5, 1981, an official was at his office, when his phone rang. Kim Jong Il was on the phone.

The latter asked in a soft voice if he had called on Jang Chol Gu recently.

“Not these days,” replied the official.

Kim Jong Il was silent for a while.

At that time the old woman, an anti-Japanese revolutionary fighter, was looking after herself at home. There was no report that she got sick or was having trouble in living, so the official and his colleagues did not concern themselves about her.

The official was afraid if anything happened to the old veteran.

Kim Jong Il resumed in a worried tone that she was presently in sick bed and the fridge at her house was out of order.

“I am sorry that I am careless with my work. I didn’t know that she is ill,” confessed the official.

“I feel my heart breaking to hear that Mother Jang is ill.

“She was a cook for President Kim Il Sung during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. Such a veteran is precious to us, more than gold. Now you are leading a happy life, forgetting the root of it.”

She had thrown herself into the anti-Japanese guerrilla war leaving her suckling baby in the care of others. She had been a faithful cook for her commander. The present happy life of the Korean people was achieved by the sweat of the brow of Mother Jang and other veterans who belonged to the first generation of the Korean revolution.

The official felt a pang of guilt.

Kim Jong Il urged him to go to Jang’s and inquire in detail about her treatment and living conditions, adding that he should report back to him and solve problems if any.

The official rushed directly to Jang’s.

The veteran consoled him that she was all right, saying that she only wished President Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il were in good health.

Price of Honey

It was October 21, 1982, a couple of years after the inauguration of the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital.

While talking with the officials concerned, Kim Jong Il asked one of them if the hospital was serving the patients with honey after their delivery.

The latter gave a specific report on the supply of the tonic following the opening of the hospital.

Kim Jong Il looked so happy about it, and then asked how they were supplying honey.

The official was hesitant, not understanding what he really meant.

Kim Jong Il asked again if they were receiving money for the honey or not.

The official replied that they were charging the price set by the state and it was negligible.

Kim Jong Il reasoned that it was wrong to make the mothers pay for the honey at the hospital.

He went on: Since olden times Korean women have taken honey after delivery. It is a good tonic for recovering their health quickly. So the Party saw that honey was sent to the maternity hospital after its opening. It is unacceptable to ask the mothers to pay for the honey which was sent to them by the Party. From now on you should serve it to them free of charge. President Kim Il Sung was very pleased that the Party was supplying honey to the patients at the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital.

Kim Jong Il asserted:

Our Party spares nothing for the future of the revolution.

Concrete Stanchions Removed

On March 15, 1985, Kim Jong Il visited the second-stage Changgwang Street under construction.

He was walking round the site to learn about the housing project, when he caught sight of concrete stanchions that did not blend well with the landscape of the residential area.

He asked an official what they were for.

The official replied that they were for a garage, and was asked again why it should be built in the residential area.

Another official explained that the garage would be fenced with high walls, adding that it would cause no great inconvenience in the residents' living.

Gazing at the new high-rise apartment block next to the stanchions, Kim Jong Il asked how many flats there were in it.

The official answered that it was designed for 800 flats.

Calculating that there would be more than 2 000 children, Kim Jong Il said that if a garage was built behind the apartment building the children would have nowhere to play.

He continued, **“It would be better to lay out a nice playground on a wide area at the site of the garage behind the folding screen-style apartment building.”**

He then asked the officials' opinion about the relocation of the garage.

One of them suggested leaving the garage as it was and building a playground between the apartment block and the garage.

Kim Jong Il said smilingly that he must have felt so sad about the already-installed stanchions, and then continued:

“Behind the folding screen-style apartment building there should be a yard and a fine park for the children, so that they could all enjoy themselves there without having to go out to the street.”

He reiterated that they should remove the concrete stanchions unhesitatingly and lay out a wide yard for the children's convenience.

Emergency Measure

An accident occurred at a quarry where workers were extracting stone needed for the construction projects in Pyongyang.

A worker, aged 26, was fatally wounded, diagnosed with severe brain contuse, basal skull fracture and bronchial pneumonia.

On May 1, 1988, learning the news, Kim Jong Il immediately had a helicopter sent to the spot.

Unfortunately, the weather changed unexpectedly, which forced the helicopter carrying the patient to land halfway to Pyongyang.

This time Kim Jong Il ordered to dispatch an airliner that could travel even in such an unfavourable weather.

That day pilots and other crew were on holiday, so an emergency measure had to be taken, something akin to what was possible only in the event of a war being declared. All the crew members were called out, and the airliner took off.

Fifteen days after being sent to a hospital in Pyongyang, the patient miraculously recovered his consciousness.

An official of the hospital showed the young worker a paper giving a summary of the services rendered to him without compensation.

It read:

Emergency measure taken on Kim Jong Il's instructions:

– Vehicles used for transport of the patient

A helicopter, airliner and ambulances

– Units engaged in his transport and treatment

Tanchon People's Hospital, the then Pyongyang University of

Medicine Hospital, an Air Force unit of the Korean People's Army and the then Pyongyang Civil Aviation.

- Medical team

More than ten winners of academic titles including Academician, Professor and Doctor

More than ten doctors and nurses

- Medicines

72 kinds of high-end medicines including musk and broad-spectrum antibiotics

- Blood infusion

5.7 litres (A human body contains five litres of blood)

- Total estimated value

USD 150 000

Water Toast

One year, to mark April 25, the founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army, Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il arranged a dinner in honour of its commanding officers.

Among the generals and officers present was Kim Kwang Jin, vice-minister of the People's Armed Forces, who had just been released from hospital.

Kim Jong Il often cast a worried glance at him while talking with other guests.

After a while he called the latter and asked if he was fine now.

"I am all right," answered the general.

Kim Jong Il said: You were discharged from hospital yesterday. So I thought you must not be feeling good and it would be better not to invite you today. But this is a holiday for the army, so I invited you. I have heard that you are suffering from pancreatitis and you should take good care of yourself. Most importantly, you should follow an appropriate regimen of diet. You

should take little of rice, meat and oil, but instead much of vegetables.

Then he began to fill a cup of wine for every guest as a token of his congratulations.

At last it was the turn of the ailing general.

Kim Jong Il studied his face and said that he should not take wine.

He continued, **“But this is a holiday for the army, so you should drink a toast. And I will fill your cup with water.”**

A smile appeared on everyone’s face.

Filling his cup, Kim Jong Il said, **“This is water, not wine, but it is a toast. I wish you good health and success in your work.”**

The General and Compatriots from Japan

On April 28, 1992, Kim Jong Il met the officials and artistes of Chongryon and other compatriots resident in Japan on a visit to their homeland on the occasion of President Kim Il Sung’s 80th birthday.

“Greedy” Chairman After enjoying a performance given by the art troupe of Chongryon, Kim Jong Il spoke highly of the artistes. He praised that the performance was very excellent and Chongryon had many talented artistes.

Then pointing at a singer, he said:

You are a good singer. You just sang the song *Roast Chestnut Ballad*, didn’t you?

The man answered, “Yes, sir.”

“What was another song?”

An official replied that it was *Nilliri Ballad*.

You are right. It was *Nilliri Ballad*. You sang the song very

well. There is no singer in the homeland who can sing folk songs as well as you can.

Turning his eyes to Chairman Han Tok Su, he said that enjoying the performance, he came to know that there were numerous gifted people in Chongryon, all of whom had been kept under the chairman's wings, being not allowed to return to the homeland.

He joked with a gentle smile that Chairman Han was so "greedy" and, among the many people whom he had permitted to go back to the homeland, there was no such talented person as the singer.

Chairman Han and the members of the art troupe burst out laughing.

"Cheers!" That night Kim Jong Il shared a dinner with the home-visiting compatriots from Japan.

He expressed thanks for their toasts and encouraged them to work hard in good health.

At that time some women at the far back called the General. The officials turned towards where the call was coming, to find that they were members of the song and dance groups from prefectures. Seated quite a long distance away from the General, they all looked anxious to toast him.

They called him again, making the officials feel nonplussed. How could so many people numbering a few hundreds come and toast him one by one.

Now all the women present called him in chorus.

Kim Jong Il wondered why.

An official explained that the women including the members of the song and dance groups from prefectures wanted to toast his health.

With a broad smile he said, **"All of you, come here."**

Suddenly more than a hundred women all charged towards him. The officials tried to keep order but in vein.

Kim Jong Il dissuaded the officials, saying that he was all right and they should not block their way.

Surrounding him, the women were half smiling and half crying, holding up their glasses.

Some shouted that they were from Osaka, some from Hokkaido and Chiba, and others from Niigata and Nagoya.

Acknowledging them all, he repeated his thanks and said that he felt as if the 700 000 Koreans in Japan all gathered there.

He clinked his glass against theirs and raised it, saying “**Cheers!**”

Trust

In the dead of winter of January 1998, after finishing his field guidance trip in Jagang Province, Kim Jong Il was in Ryanggang Province.

He remained sullen all along, feeling as if a lump was lingering in his heart.

He was pondering over his failure to visit an industrial complex during his former two-day trip. According to an official accompanying him, the factory failed to fulfil its production plan and its manager and Party secretary were to be punished for it.

But the General could not suppress sympathy for them welling up in his heart.

At last he ordered that his train should go back to Jagang Province, not to Pyongyang. Before changing the schedule, he told his entourage that mothers care more for her ailing children and he was returning to Kanggye to meet the officials of the factory and learn about the punishment for them.

His train arrived at a station in Kanggye. Before starting for the factory, he urged his entourage to hurry up, saying that he had not slept the night before as he was worried about the officials and workers who might be crestfallen, and that they should go quickly to console them.

The whole factory received him with enthusiastic cheers. The officials and workers, still feeling remorseful for their poor performance, could hardly express their greetings to him.

With consoling eyes on his beaming face, Kim Jong Il acknowledged the cheering crowd.

Looking round the compound and the shop floor, he said with joy: I am happy to learn that there is no imported machine in the assembly line and everything is what they produced in the spirit of self-reliance. In this factory I cannot find any signs of mysticism about technology, and those having an obsession with imported goods would be brought to their senses if they were here. Certainly, the compound looks neat. Landscape greening is so good that it does not look like a factory. It is better than a health resort in Mt. Kumgang or Mt. Chilbo. If there is an empty house, I wish I spent a night here. ...

As he praised them so highly instead of scolding them, the officials of the factory could no longer contain themselves. One of them said penitently that they were too incompetent to put production on track.

The General said magnanimously that he did not think they were wholly responsible for the failure to carry the plan to completion, that part of the reason was insufficient supply of materials, and that they should work harder in the future. Then he gave the official an encouraging pat on the shoulder.

The latter burst out crying.

Kim Jong Il said soothingly that he should not cry as the working class has a stout heart. He assured that they could boost production as he would take responsibility for the supply of materials and solve all other problems.

That day he looked round a showroom at the factory.

He stopped in front of the toy corner and gazed at a rabbit-labelled pistol, designed to fire a paper bullet when the trigger was pulled.

He asked an official if the toy pistols were modelled after the one he had sent before.

The official answered in the affirmative.

Kim Jong Il picked up one of the toys and studied it. Suddenly, he pointed it at an official nearby and pulled the trigger, shouting **“Bang.”**

A paper bullet popped out.

The official exclaimed in surprise, followed by a gay laughter.

Then Kim Jong Il grabbed another pistol and did the same to another official.

A cry of surprise and loud laughter dispelled an air of melancholy that was lingering in the minds of the officials.

Hours passed.

The entourage was consulting their watches over and over, and at last reminded Kim Jong Il that it was time for his departure.

At that moment an official of the factory, long hesitant to say something, stepped forward towards Kim Jong Il and spoke out:

“True to your instructions we will overfulfil the production plan without fail. Well, but...” his voice trailed off.

The official dared not utter his wish. He wanted to have a photograph taken with him.

The General was reading his mind.

He gave a hearty laugh and said:

“I have never had a photograph taken with those who failed to carry out their plan.

“But I believe that you will fulfil the plan for this year. Let’s pose for a photograph.”

Fishing Rod

One summer day in 1967, during his visit to a coast artillery company, Kim Jong Il was going out to the sea in a small boat.

His fishing rod lying on the boat attracted the envious stares of the rowing soldier.

Born in a coastal village, he was adept at fishing. When they reached a spur, he stroked the rod surreptitiously thinking that this behaviour might not be noticed.

On March 10, 1998, more than 30 years after that, the General visited this unit again. At a revolutionary museum in the unit, he recognized the former soldier who was now working as the head of the museum.

He said: The memory of my first visit scores of years back is vivid to me. When you were rowing me to the sea to get a view of the company's artillery positions, you were a corporal and chairman of a primary organization of the youth league. Now you are a colonel and the head of this revolutionary museum. I am very glad to see your dignified appearance.

Then he posed for a photograph with the ex-corporal.

After that, he called one of his entourage and told him to bring the fishing rod.

He said to the colonel: That day I saw you staring enviously at my fishing rod while rowing the boat. So today, I have brought this for you.

He continued, **“It was some years ago that I planned to bring you this fishing rod. But time was pressing, so today I brought it.”**

The colonel looked at him with teary eyes.

“Here you are, please.”

He dropped his head with tears gushing from his eyes.

“Well, you should not cry on this happy day,” Kim Jong Il said patting him on the shoulder.

“I wish you success in your work. You should work hard.”

“Supreme Commander, I will be faithful to you all my life. My best wish is your good health.” his voice trailed off.

“Thank you. I wish you serve long in the army. You should take good care of yourself.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Let me hold your hands again.”

Generals on Guard Duty

Around noon on May 4, 1998, an order was issued to the posts on a frontline height to relieve the soldiers from the guard posts.

The following is how it happened.

From early morning Kim Jong Il was on an inspection tour in the area. By noon he was reminded that it was time to pose for a photograph with the soldiers.

But he stood silent for a good while, looking over the rugged mountains extending along the front line, and asked an officer of the unit about the layout of the subunits and their guard posts.

After listening to his reply, he said that if time was allowed, he would visit all the posts of the soldiers on combat duty on this height, continuing regretfully that because of the tight schedule, he could not do so.

He was absorbed in deep thought for a moment, and said to the generals accompanying him:

You should go and relieve the soldiers on duty so that all the soldiers on this height could gather here. They would feel very sorry if they knew that their supreme commander climbed down this frontline height without seeing them all as they were on combat duty.

I want to meet all the soldiers and pose for a photograph with them.

This order was a great surprise to all.

But Kim Jong Il reiterated with a slow nod of his head that he would have a photograph taken with them all although it would take time.

Another officer of the unit said, “Supreme Commander, thank you very much. All the soldiers of the unit have yearned for you day and night, anxiously waiting for this moment.”

I also longed to see my soldiers on the front line. As you have been looking forward to seeing me, so I have yearned for you. I wish I visited all the posts on this height.

The generals rushed to the posts and the soldiers, relieved by them, darted to where their Supreme Commander was waiting.

Kim Jong Il welcomed them gladly, saying **“How are you? I am here to see you.”**

On the Soldiers’ Side

Kim Jong Il inspected a military academy on May 10, 1998.

After seeing the cadets under training, he watched a basketball match between officers and soldiers in the gymnasium at the academy.

He feasted his eyes on the players’ nimble passing and dribbling, highly praising their skills.

The No. 6 of the soldiers’ team made the first three-point shot.

“Three-point shot is the key to victory in a basketball match,” exclaimed Kim Jong Il with satisfaction, clapping his hands before anybody else.

Each time the soldiers made a three-point shot, he gave them an enthusiastic applause.

After the match was over, he called the umpire and asked the score.

“The score is 17:26,” answered the latter.

“Which team is the winner?” asked the General again.

The umpire fudged his reply, wondering if he really did not know the result.

He said in a faltering voice that it was the officers’ team.

But Kim Jong Il countered that in his opinion the Red team was better, and laughed out loud.

All roared with laughter. The Red team was the soldiers’.

Though they lost the game, the players of the Red team shouted proudly:

“The General always favours us, soldiers!”

“Hurry Up, Please”

On May 31, 1999, Kim Jong Il arrived at the field training ground of a company after crossing high, rugged mountains.

It was just before lunchtime.

He learned about the soldiers’ training and moved to a makeshift kitchen in a corner of the field.

Seeing the side dishes piled up on the table, he asked what was the menu for lunch. Then he edged closer to the “kitchen wagon,” on which the ovens were steaming hot.

“Let me see what is ready for my soldiers’ meal.”

He mounted the wagon and opened the ovens one by one.

Stepping down, he said to the officers: In the period of field training the soldiers should be served with hot, good dishes. They might be unusually hungry, so it is necessary to feed them better and on time. You should serve meals at appointed hours lest they should go hungry. To do so, you should lay out the field kitchen well and ensure enough supply of rice and other foodstuffs so that meals could be prepared in good time.

Then the General asked the time, and said to his entourage:

“It is high time for my soldiers to have lunch. Hurry up, please.”

“Supreme Commander!” called an officer of the unit in a choking voice.

Others were also crying.

Kim Jong Il emphasized that the soldiers should have lunch on time and, urging his entourage to take leave quickly, he got into the car.

Visit to a Discharged Soldier's Family

On August 10, 1999, during his field guidance at the Taehongdan County Combined Farm, Kim Jong Il called in on a young couple's house to learn about the living conditions of the discharged soldiers there.

The two-storey house was designed so excellently to blend well with its surroundings.

“How are you? I am here to see your house,” Kim Jong Il said to the young couple.

He asked about the husband's unit during his military service, their birthplaces and work at the branch farm.

The husband had been a sailor and his wife was born in a coastal city.

He looked round the rooms on the lower floor and stepped into the kitchen, opening the cupboard with paternal care.

Then he walked up to the bedroom on the upper floor. Hanging on the wall were a sailor's cap and uniform with orders and medals on it.

“You were awarded many decorations,” said the guest, stroking the decorations on the uniform.

On the wall was also a framed photograph which the husband had taken with President Kim Il Sung when he, as a soldier, took part in a national conference.

Kim Jong Il asked the husband where he was in the photograph.

The latter pointed at his position.

Nodding with a smile, the General praised that he had achieved

a lot in the long years as a sailor and had been faithful during his military service.

He sat on the bed and asked if their baby was expected.

The husband grinned and his wife blushed.

He told the guest that thanks to his care they were provided with the bedding, wedding dress and five holiday suits.

The latter said with a broad smile: It is good. You live in this excellent house, and I will send you household utensils, including a good TV, which will match your house. You and other discharged soldiers are genuine revolutionaries and ardent patriots who performed exploits in the military posts for national defence and are working with devotion to implement the Party's agricultural policy. I want to meet all the discharged soldiers in Taehongdan County but I cannot afford time to do so. I want you to give my regards to them. All of you should lead the masses in and out of work by displaying the revolutionary soldier spirit, as you did in the days of military service.

The young couple thanked him time and again, saying with gratitude that they had been provided with a wedding spread, new house, new clothes and new household utensils, that their parents could not come as they lived far away and that he was the first to visit their family with parental affection.

The General said with a benevolent smile, **“It is natural that I should be the first to see you in your parents’ stead.”**

A Wish Unaccepted

On December 5, 1999, Kim Jong Il visited a fish farm which had been built by a unit of the Korean People's Army.

Seeing a quagmire turned fish farm, he asked an officer of the unit, **“What is the area of the fish farm?”**

Hearing the reply, he praised its large area.

He moved to the middle of the farm girded by spawner, fry and catfish ponds, where he inquired in detail about the layout of the ponds, the topography of the region, the farm's production capacity and construction. He observed it was a miracle that when everything was in short supply, the unit built a modern fish farm and completed a breeding system there in a matter of 40 days. He added that such miracle could be wrought only by the soldiers of the KPA who are ready to move mountains and fill up seas, going through fire and water, if they were ordered to do so by the Party.

The officer felt unworthy of this commendation, thinking to himself that drawing up a net teeming with big fishes would make a spectacular sight. In the hope of showing it to the General, he said that a net was nearby and it would take no more than five minutes to net the fishes.

He was going in a hurry to bring the net, when Kim Jong Il stopped him.

“No,” demanded the latter.

The officer halted, looking at him in wonder.

The General said, **“You should not call out the soldiers to haul in the net on this cold day.”**

The Happiest News

On April 19, 2001, in the period of the Arduous March, Kim Jong Il visited a newly built fish farm.

He asked the officials there, **“What was the output of rainbow trout for last year?”**

The answer was not satisfactory.

Feed for the fish was of a high calorific value, so mass-producing them was too costly. To keep the fish farm going, they had to earn foreign exchange by selling the small amount to hotels.

An official told Kim Jong Il frankly about this situation.

“So you sell the fish to hotels,” muttered the latter with a regretful look.

“From next year we will increase the output and supply the fish to the people,” pledged an official, still feeling remorseful.

The General emphasized that they should do so without fail and never sell the fish to the hotels. Then he said that if they were determined to increase the output to 100t, he would ensure enough supply of feed. He reaffirmed that they should not sell their products but supply all of them to the people.

At that moment another official said hastily that they had provided the people with some of the fish on the occasion of the Day of the Sun (April 15, President Kim Il Sung’s birthday), adding that there were many who expressed thanks for Kim Jong Il’s care.

The General beamed, **“You supplied rainbow trout to the people!”**

Repeating what he had just said, he praised the officials highly and said that it was the happiest news he had ever heard.

“Don’t You Feel Scared at Night?”

On May 23, 2001, Kim Jong Il visited a secret camp in Mt. Paegyok in the Sinhung Area Revolutionary Battle Site, South Hamgyong Province.

Guided by a docent, he climbed a windy hill 1 500m above sea level. As they were approaching the secret camp, he asked the girl which school she had graduated from.

After hearing her answer, he gazed round the mountains and asked again, **“Aren’t you afraid of living in this remote mountain?”**

“No, sir.”

“Oh, you are not.”

He looked smilingly at her and changed his tone, saying, **“Be frank with me. Don’t you feel scared at night?”**

“No, I don’t,” mumbled the girl with her head sinking down.

Kim Jong Il saw through her innermost feelings and observed that in this out-of-the-way mountain the girl and her colleagues must have been afraid of going outdoors at night.

He asserted that precautionary measures should be taken against the beasts which haunted the place.

He asked if electricity came into the mountain and the docents were watching TV.

Learning that there was no power supply there, he was sorry that at night the girls could not live under electric lights, nor could they watch TV.

A senior official of the county told him that to solve the problem of electricity, they were building a small hydropower station near the secret camp.

Kim Jong Il asked about the rate of precipitation in this area.

Noting that because of the low rainfall, the hydropower station would not produce enough electricity, he advised that it would be better to instal a wind turbine.

He stressed that the officials should pay close attention to the living conditions of the docents and keepers in this remote mountain, adding that they should strive to solve the problem of electricity soon and improve supply services for them.

Manager Looking Taller

The manager of a branch of the Youth Goat Farm in Hamhung was overshadowed by his taller wife, who often complained about her husband’s low height.

On May 24, 2001, Kim Jong Il called on the family during his visit to the goat farm.

He asked the manager about his age and schooling.

After hearing his reply, he said, **“You graduated in stockbreeding and veterinary science from Hamhung University of Agriculture and volunteered to work here with your wife to render a contribution to implementing the Party’s policy on stockbreeding. I appreciate your decision.”**

The guest asked with a worried look why he was small for his age of 36 and if he was ill.

The manager answered that he was healthy.

A senior official of the province made a step forward and said:

“His mother bore children within a year of another, and I think he was breast-fed insufficiently.”

Smiling at this joke, Kim Jong Il said he was relieved to hear that he was in good health and goat milk would help him gain weight.

Stepping out of the house, he proposed posing for a photograph with the family members as they were sparing no effort in raising goats.

They hurried to him, the manager standing on the right, his wife on the left and their son in front.

The cameraman was pressing the shutter, when Kim Jong Il called out, **“Wait a moment.”**

He looked from the man to his wife.

All watched him, looking puzzled. He asked the couple to switch their positions, the husband standing in a higher position and his wife in a lower one.

The photograph was better composed, the manager looking tall and dignified.

Later, when this photograph was carried in a newspaper, his old classmates recognized him.

“The ‘shorty’ of our class has grown very tall.”

“This fellow must be indulging in butter and cheese after volunteering to work in the goat farm.”

Now the manager's wife felt very proud of her husband, widely known as a tall man thanks to Kim Jong Il's care.

From then on she got along with her husband without uttering any complaint about his stature.

Paternal Care

The following happened on September 18, 2001, when Kim Jong Il was inspecting a unit of the Korean People's Army.

“Cover the Box Quickly” That day, looking round several places of the unit, Kim Jong Il praised the officers and soldiers for equipping it with everything needed for supply services by relying on their own efforts.

At the kitchen an officer in charge of supply services showed him an ice-cream box lying beside the pass-through.

Opening the lid, he said: “Supreme Commander, this is our self-made ice cream.”

With a surprised look, Kim Jong Il asked if they were making ice cream by themselves.

The officer said that each soldier was served with 300g of ice cream every day.

Kim Jong Il asked him with a smile, **“Do you make ice cream with soya bean juice?”**

The latter replied that it was made with milk from goats they were raising.

Noting that it would not be easy for the unit to produce ice cream for itself, Kim Jong Il praised, **“You are admirable indeed.”**

A little overwhelmed by his praise, the officer stood a while, forgetting to close the lid of the box.

Kim Jong Il urged him to put it down lest the ice cream should melt away.

“Cover the box quickly,” demanded the former.

The officer obeyed in haste and followed him.

Walking a few steps ahead, Kim Jong Il turned back and returned to the box.

As others stood transfixed by this strange behaviour, he fixed the lid into its proper position.

Temperature inside Freezing Chamber Kim Jong Il was also led to a cold-storage tunnel built by the unit itself. An officer, who was guiding him, said that there was a freezing chamber in the tunnel.

Looking inside the chamber, he asked, **“What is the temperature here?”**

“Well ...” faltered the guide.

Then he asked other officials in his company, **“What do you guess is the temperature?”**

No one could answer this question.

An officer of the unit told him that they had not gauged the temperature.

“It is around -15°C,” said Kim Jong Il.

He stepped into the frost-bound chamber and stood a while as if to feel the temperature.

Then he said apprehensively, **“No, it is not fit. How long will the meat last at this temperature? Let me see whether the meat is dry or not.”**

He moved forward and pressed his finger against the frozen meat.

“You can freeze meat perfectly at -25 to -30°C.”

He recounted that when stored at -15°C, moist meat might go bad in a month or two, and specified ways for storing it in good condition.

Stepping out of the chamber, he emphasized, **“Now the temperature inside your freezing chamber is around -15°C.”**

After seeing their Supreme Commander off, the officers of the unit came back to the chamber to measure the temperature there.

They were all surprised to see the thermometer indicating at -15°C.

A Lathe Operator's Whisper

On the evening of December 21, 2001 Kim Jong Il reminded some officials of an anecdote that happened during their visit to a factory.

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Kim Jong Il was making his way around the factory, seeing the hard-working people on the shop floor, when an operator of about 20 stopped his lathe and approached him. He made a deep bow to him.

This abrupt behaviour stupefied the officials in his company.

Teary-eyed, the worker came closer and whispered something to Kim Jong Il.

The latter was leaning forward to get what the young man was saying amid the grind of the machines.

Seeing an official coming up, Kim Jong Il motioned him to stay still.

He heard the young man out, before telling the officials that the worker thanked him.

But they looked bewildered by his simple account.

As they walked out of the shop floor, Kim Jong Il asked the officials if they heard what the young man was whispering to him. He praised the worker highly, saying that he thanked him for the supply of delicious chicken and eggs.

Noting that the feedback from the citizens who were supplied with the chicken and eggs from chicken farms was great indeed, he said that whenever he visited machine factories, the workers

thanked him, above all else, for the supply and it was good to see their happy faces.

Kim Jong Il went on:

“Seeing the happy smiles on their faces, I thought that it was right and worthwhile to have built chicken farms for the benefit of workers, and felt the pride and glory of working for them. I have nothing more to wish if I can bring joy to the people. Their happiness and pleasure are just mine. I have visited many units so far, but now I am most pleased. Nowadays, I am not tired even after burning the midnight oil. Rather, I feel invigorated.”

“This Toffee May Break Children’s Teeth”

The following happened on February 23, 2002, when Kim Jong Il was at a toffee shop newly built in the Taehongdan Potato-processing Factory.

After watching the packaging line at the toffee slab workteam, he pointed out that there was too much of manual work involved. Noting that unmanned processing is a global trend in foodstuff processing, he underlined the need to eliminate manual work in this sector.

He picked up a toffee slab and felt its weight.

It was 1kg package and its quality was not good.

He asked an official, **“Do you make uniform 1kg packages?”**

“Yes, sir.”

“Why?”

“Because they are supplied to households.”

Showing the package to the official, he asked if he had thought of children who would take this toffee.

The official stood perplexed.

Kim Jong Il said that children like toffee more than adults, adding that the slab was too big for them.

“This toffee may break children’s teeth,” he retorted.

Stressing that officials should work with meticulous attention to detail, he advised that they should package the toffee slabs in varying sizes, e.g. 250g or 500g.

“Verdict of Not Guilty”

On March 1, 2002, Kim Jong Il was inspecting a women’s company of the Korean People’s Army.

Acknowledging the cheering soldiers, he studied them one by one and said with a satisfied smile that they were all robust.

He remarked, **“The officers look sturdier.”**

He made a gesture indicating their plumpness and laughed loudly, saying that some of them were outgrowing their uniforms.

He praised them highly for their excellent training, noting that because of their patience women might be better than men at shooting.

He made the rounds of the education room and the barracks, asking how newspapers were delivered to them and if they were watching TV every day and the rooms were not cold.

Suddenly, he changed the subject and asked, **“Why do you think the officers are sturdier than the soldiers?”**

The company commander faltered, unable to find an answer.

Kim Jong Il asked another officer the same question, but got no reply.

Then an official said jokingly that the officers might be having meals separately, eating two bowls of bean-curd dregs a meal.

There was a burst of laughter.

But the officers turned scarlet from embarrassment. The company commander, making a step forward towards Kim Jong Il, protested that they were having an equal share with the soldiers.

All laughed at her “petition of innocence.”

Stroking her shoulder, the General said in her defence, “**Maybe it is because officers are selected among the soldiers of strong constitution.**”

Docent at the Songam Cave

One day in the mid-1990s, when the country was undergoing economic difficulties, Kim Jong Il was giving field guidance in a mountainous region. Surveying the topography of the area, he predicted that there might be a cave in the mountains.

Later, the Songam Cave was discovered by the soldiers of the Korean People’s Army, who laid out the wonder of nature in a splendid way.

Learning the news, Kim Jong Il visited the cave on April 19, 2002.

Flowers Coming in All Shapes Kim Jong Il and his entourage toured one scenic spot after another, marvelling at the mystery and beauty of the cave. When they stopped at a scenic spot, the docent said that it was named *Paradise*.

Nodding his head, Kim Jong Il gazed up at the ceiling that was overlaid with stone flowers, big and small. They were reminiscent of roses wet with morning dew.

The docent offered to recite a poem about the scenic spot.

Kim Jong Il readily agreed with her.

Baby-flowers are growing
Sister-flowers are blooming
Mummy-flowers are smiling
Granny-flowers are withering

Her reciting over, Kim Jong Il commented with a broad laugh that the poem was really nice.

Guided around the cave for long hours, he pointed out several issues: It is said that stone flowers grow 1mm a year under favourable conditions, but no one is certain about this. How tall they grow and what fosters their growth should be scientifically proved. Research should be made into the evolution of the flowery scenery in this underground palace, so that people can be better informed of it. Political expressions should be avoided in naming scenic spots. No colour other than white should be used in illuminating objects, so as to accentuate their natural beauty and make them more clearly visible. There is no need to name every stalactite, and it is better to urge visitors to choose their favourites and name them freely.

At one spot, Kim Jong Il caught sight of a goose-shaped stalactite hanging upside down from the ceiling.

“That looks like a live goose hanging by its heels to steal glances at the fairy girls bathing at the underground ‘Eight Pools of Mt. Kumgang,’” said he, adding that the eyes on its head were lifelike.

Laughter echoed through the cave.

Love Story of the Docent The docent who showed Kim Jong Il around the scenic spots of the cave was a girl.

He asked her how old she was, and she answered 27.

But the girl felt herself blush when he asked if she had a boyfriend.

Seeing the docent faltering, he urged her to go ahead.

The girl pulled herself together and began to recount a story.

...

It was in the days of the Arduous March and forced march that the KPA soldiers broke ground for laying out the Songam Cave by order of their Supreme Commander.

The soldiers had to tighten their belts owing to insufficient supply of food, but they struggled day and night to implement the order.

Deeply moved by their heroic struggle, she and her colleagues volunteered to work alongside the soldiers.

One day she parched the maize grains that she had saved out of her daily portions and brought them to the hard-working soldiers.

She was handing out the grains, when unfortunately she had nothing left for the last soldier. She was afraid if he might be a private. But she was relieved to recognize through the insignia on his uniform that he was one of noncommissioned officers, as she believed that they were usually broadminded.

She apologized, "I am very sorry. I was too careless to leave some maize grains for you. Let me assure you that I will pay double the price for what I have owed to you today."

The soldier joked, "You shall pay dearly for this. I will remember every word of yours."

This was the beginning of their love story. Later, they promised to marry after Kim Jong Il's visit. ...

Hearing the docent out, the General said that their love was more beautiful and precious as it blossomed in the cave, praising that she and her boyfriend showed the noble spiritual world of the young people who support their Party and motherland in the Songun era.

He said to her, **"You are a happy girl who has brought into bloom the beautiful love of youth in the Songun era."**

Afterwards, he had a spread sent for the couple's wedding ceremony.

Tour Arranged as a Reward

On June 5, 2002, visiting the Komdok Mine, Kim Jong Il met the members of Mining Workteam No. 3 at the April 5 Pit of the Kumgol Branch Mine.

The workteam was organized with those who had been born

about 40 years previously, when President Kim Il Sung had given field guidance at the mine. It was widely known for having produced six Labour Heroes of the DPRK and overfulfilling its annual plan every year.

In his talks with the miners, Kim Jong Il said: You are already 41. Now you have grown up to be the masters of the mine. You, the buttress of the mine, are hardcore members of our Party. It is good that the children of the heroes are attending the revolutionary schools.

An official of the mine told Kim Jong Il that he was so worried about the miners' health as they persisted in working overnight to increase the output of ores.

Kim Jong Il demanded that the miners be not allowed to sleep in the pit.

Vivid in his memory was the day 27 years previously when he, with a bush-clover cap on, descended to the April 5 Pit and asked officials to take good care of the miners.

He emphasized that the miners should get out of the pit after work and engage in recreational activities with their families, adding that advanced science and technology should be introduced proactively to make the mining work easier and raise production efficiency.

Then he, together with the meritorious miners, saw a performance given by the itinerary art group of the mine.

After the performance he was led out of the hall, when he halted and said, **“You should arrange for the members of Mining Workteam No. 3 at the April 5 Pit to visit Pyongyang on my invitation and enjoy the grand mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang*. This tour is a reward for their labour feats.”**

Some days later, the miners and their families set out on a tour in Pyongyang.

They spent happy days in the capital city, seeing the Kim Il Sung

Prize-winning performance, enjoying hospitalities at famous service facilities and visiting many places.

“You Are So Excellent”

On October 18, 2002, Kim Jong Il inspected a women’s company of the Korean People’s Army.

After looking round several places of the company, he was led into a room where the soldiers were standing to give an artistic performance.

Acknowledging the cheering women, he said, **“Sit down please. Let me see your performance.”**

He seated himself on a chair, and the performance began.

Seeing the performers’ dance, he commented:

“The women are dancing so merrily in a soldierly manner.

“This work vividly depicts the soldiers’ training and worthwhile life.

“My soldiers are very optimistic.”

Next in the programme was a narrative play *Where are you, dear General*.

This play delineated an anecdote of the company soldiers’ life a few years back, truthfully portraying their noble mental world.

Kim Jong Il said, drying his tears on a handkerchief:

“Tears gather in my eyes as I see the play with a good content and of a high level of depiction.

“The soldiers of this company are very good at performing.

“They are excellent indeed. I enjoyed it very much.

“I was a little bit tired from the recent trip around several units, but your performance was good enough to relieve my fatigue. I feel refreshed now.”

The performance over, he stepped out of the room.

He was all smiles as he said to the commander and the political

instructor of the company, **“You only practice performing in this mountain, don’t you?”**

“No, we do training, sideline farming and all other things.”

“You are so excellent.

“You are very good at performing. Very good, indeed.”

Then an official said that it was very interesting to see the soldiers sing and dance tapping their feet.

Kim Jong Il agreed with him, saying:

“I think this company is the best in performing.

“In one way it seems to have been devoted to improving living conditions, and in the other, to preparing for artistic performance.”

As One Does to One’s Close Friend

On July 21, 2003, Kim Jong Il inspected a communications unit of the Korean People’s Army.

At the wireless lecture room he asked a soldier sitting in the front row:

“How old are you?”

“I am 20,” answered the soldier.

“How tall are you?”

“I am 20.”

“Well, I am asking how tall you are.”

“I am 1.8m tall.”

“1.8m? You look less than 1.7m tall.”

The officers standing by were perplexed.

An official said that the soldier looked a bit embarrassed.

Kim Jong Il smiled and patted him on the back, saying, **“You don’t need to be so embarrassed. Talk to me as you do to your close friend. There is nothing special in your Supreme Commander.”**

The soldier composed himself and smiled.

Kim Jong Il stated, **“The Supreme Commander was brought forth from among the people and shares weal and woe with his soldiers. I am so intimate with them that they are willing to say anything in a whisper.”**

Then he asked the soldier again:

“How tall are you?”

Now the latter gave him a right answer.

“Where is your house?”

“In Hukkyo-ri, Hwangju County, North Hwanghae Province.”

“Oh, Hwangju! How are your parents?”

“They are fine, thank you.”

“Do you often write letters to them?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Write about the life in your unit frequently.”

“I see, Supreme Commander.”

He smiled at the soldier’s lively and cheerful manner, and stepped out of the room.

“I Will Not Go In There”

On December 12, 2003, Kim Jong Il was inspecting a company of the Korean People’s Army.

Looking round several places of the company, he praised it for making notable progress in improving its combat efficiency and providing a rich diet for the soldiers.

An officer of the company was going to lead him into a cellar where they were growing bean sprouts in cold winter. Probably, he intended to boast about it.

But the Supreme Commander turned back, saying, **“No. I will not go in there.”**

The officials looked nonplussed as he had been very

meticulous about the matters concerning the soldiers' diet.

He explained to them: When I was visiting a unit, I saw bean sprouts discoloured. I asked an official why, and he said that they were exposed to sunlight because people frequented the cellar. I am afraid that because of us, the bean sprouts in this company may discolour.

It was some days before that he visited the unit. Guided to the cellar, he saw sprouts turning greenish.

After being briefed on the reason by the officers, he said, **“It is advisable to limit entry into the cellar for growing bean sprouts. Otherwise, they may turn greenish because of exposure to sunlight and become less palatable.”**

Gift for an Artist

On January 13, 2004, Kim Jong Il was looking round the soldiers' hall of a KPA unit.

On display in the lobby and along the corridor were different kinds of visual aids needed for political and ideological education of the soldiers.

Watching them one by one, he stopped in front of a calligraphy scroll, which read “Let us add glory to our youth with arms!”

He gazed at the letters that were symbolic of the soldiers' spirit of defending their country. Then he commented that the letters were written very well and the fifth letter “chong” was especially attractive. (*Chong* is part of *chongchun* in Korean which means youth in English)

He said, **“The letter ‘chong’ looks full of vigour, as if it has a dragon in itself.”**

He asked who wrote the letters.

An officer replied that they were written by a senior artist of the unit.

Speaking highly of his exceptional skill in calligraphy, the General said that he was very pleased to find a gifted calligrapher in this unit.

After studying the letters again, he said, **“As a reward for his excellent work, I will send the senior artist of this unit a set of calligraphy tools which was among the favourites of President Kim Il Sung.”**

The officials were greatly surprised.

The President had been good at calligraphy, so important personages of other countries would present him with calligraphy tools as gifts. He had other gifts displayed at the International Friendship Exhibition House, and he was also unsparing in giving them to his officials. However, he kept calligraphy tools for himself.

Kim Jong Il asked an official how many of them were left.

The latter replied a few, and opined that they should be kept as national treasures.

Kim Jong Il insisted, **“The President would be more pleased to know that we are giving them to our outstanding calligraphers, instead of keeping them in mothballs.”**

Company on Soljae Pass

On April 1, 2004, Kim Jong Il visited a women’s company of the Korean People’s Army.

He looked round the barracks nestling in a remote mountain and praised that the education room and the bedroom were neat and tidy. After seeing the subsidiary food store, mess hall, bathhouse and sauna, he said with a satisfied smile that the company’s soldiers seemed better off than former landlords in a mountainous region.

Then he said to the soldiers, **“This company on Soljae Pass can be said a unit of my old acquaintance.”**

The women looked at him in silent wonder. They could not

understand why he said so, because it was his first visit to the company. He had not visited the company before, and their unit was little known to the army.

Smiling at them, he said with deep emotion:

“A few years ago, when I was returning to Pyongyang from an inspection trip around the front line, I saw women soldiers saluting me on this pass, each holding a bunch of wild flowers. As I was going past them, I wondered who were those women standing on an out-of-the-way pass with flowers in their hands. I was told that they belonged to the company on Soljae Pass and were waiting for Pyongyang-bound cars to send their flowers to the Statue of President Kim Il Sung on Mansu Hill. I learned that over the past ten years since the President had passed away, the soldiers of this company have picked or tended flowers with care in this remote mountain, tied them in bunches and sent them to Pyongyang.”

Still in his memory were the ordinary soldiers whom he had passed by on his way back from the front line.

Looking at the teary-eyed women, he said that he had longed to meet the laudable soldiers who had prepared flowers in a remote mountain with a yearning for the President.

Before leaving the company, he said that he would keep the name of the company in mind, adding that it was impressive.

Then he observed in a meaningful tone that in addition to the Persimmon Tree Company came into being another famous unit, Company on Soljae Pass.

Future or Present

On May 2, 2004, Kim Jong Il inspected a unit of the Korean People's Army.

At the mess hall he saw a bar chart hanging on the wall, which

provided a visual depiction of soya bean outputs by subunit.

After watching it a while, he asked an officer of the unit about the preparations for soya bean farming.

The officer replied, “So far, we have ploughed and manured the fields. After a few days, we are planning to plant seeds. This year we will surely win the first place across the army by pressing on with soya bean farming.”

Kim Jong Il applauded the decision, noting that whatever one does, one should be assured of oneself. Then pointing at the figure for soya bean ration written on the daily portion table, he asked, **“Is this figure for the future or for the present?”**

The officer replied that the figure indicated the daily amount of soya beans for each soldier after this year’s harvest.

After all, it was a plan for the future.

Kim Jong Il said seriously, **“You must be prudent. If you fail to supply the planned amount to the soldiers, it means you are mocking them.”**

This was a stern demand that officers must make a solemn promise to their men.

Exception

On February 5, 2006, Kim Jong Il visited a unit of the Korean People’s Army in a mountainous region. It was an auspicious event for the soldiers, as there were few visitors to their unit and even senior officers dropped in on them only a few times a year.

In consideration of their lonely and solitary life, he stayed for long hours with the soldiers.

He saw the balls of fermented soya beans hanging on the wall of the bedroom, and taught how to make soya bean paste. And he asked about the supply of cigarettes and electricity.

The political instructor of the unit, who was hanging back, requested him to see an artistic performance prepared by a company.

The officials accompanying him were bewildered by this request. Above all else, it was high time for his departure. And they were well aware that he would not see an artistic performance in the morning hours inconvenient for singers.

To their surprise, he said with a loud laugh that he would make an exception and see the performance.

He continued:

“This is far away from Pyongyang, and the officials of the Ministry of the People’s Armed Forces seldom visit here. The soldiers would be sorry to learn that the Supreme Commander left the battalion without seeing their artistic performance.”

He then sat on a wooden chair and saw the performance. He was the first to clap his hands.

For the Residents to Be Evacuated

On March 3, 2006, Kim Jong Il visited the Samsu Power Station under construction.

Standing on the dam he looked down at the construction site. After a good while he asked an official, pointing at a place, **“Is that area to be submerged?”**

The official answered in the affirmative. Again he asked how many households should be evacuated.

“A few thousand,” replied the official.

“How are you dealing with them?”

A senior official of the provincial Party committee said that 30% of them evacuated the area and they were sharing abode with others nearby.

“What?” bellowed Kim Jong Il.

He reproved the official, saying that the residents in the area should not be dealt with in that way and new houses should have been built for them.

Noting that evacuation of the affected people was an important matter, he pointed out that he visited the site to inquire into this matter because there was no document on the relocation of dwelling houses, among the many which were filed to him concerning the construction of the Samsu Power Station.

After a pause, he stressed that coaxing the residents would not be enough and this matter should be solved in a practical way.

Then he recounted: The people in Ryanggang Province were the poorest during the rule of Japanese imperialism. But their revolutionary sense was strong. Many of them crossed the Amnok River to take part in the anti-Japanese struggle. To solve the problem of their living is of primary importance. You should discuss the matter concerning the relocation of dwelling houses in the area to be submerged, at an enlarged meeting of the executive committee of the provincial Party committee. As this is an important matter, you should hold a joint meeting with the Party Central Committee. Before evacuating the residents, new houses should be built for them, which are far better than the old ones.

The matter still weighed on him.

He estimated that as the affected households numbered a few thousand and each might have no less than three, the total number of the residents was very large. Officials should keep in mind that the people are more precious than tens of thousands of kW of electricity, he emphasized.

Before leaving the construction site, he reiterated that they should push ahead with the construction of the power station in parallel with the housing project for the affected residents.

At a Health Resort

On November 14, 2006, Kim Jong Il visited a health resort for farmers in Hamju County.

At the courtyard he watched the buildings arrayed against the background of a pine grove.

After a good while, he asked an official if they would have much snow there.

“Not so much,” answered the latter.

He asked the reason why the buildings were covered with a broach roof.

Noting that he could see similar buildings in other places, he said that structures should sustain local features and a broach roof was of a European style.

To lay out the resort in a peculiar way, the designers had toured several places and held debates over the architecture of buildings at health resorts of other countries. After all, they adopted this rare model to give the exterior of buildings distinctiveness.

The officials watched the buildings again, only to feel an aching void at the thought that they did not blend well with the local landscape.

Kim Jong Il said to the officials, **“You should see if there is any other unit that seeks to design their buildings on a foreign style of architecture such as a broach roof, and ensure that national measures are taken to correct this tendency.”**

Then he pointed at the dwelling houses of the employees of a power station on the opposite side of the health resort, saying that their roofs looked good. He advised that they should review the design of the buildings at the resort and make a further study of their exterior.

Asking One Question after Another

On December 3, 2006, Kim Jong Il visited Migok in Sariwon to see the new houses in the village.

First of all, he looked round the monument to President Kim Il Sung's field guidance and the museum of his revolutionary activities.

Then he was guided to a two-storey house.

It had two rooms on each floor and they had double walls to keep off the cold in winter.

He had talks with the host and his wife for a while, and asked if there were two living rooms in the house.

A senior official of the province said that there were two more rooms on the upper floor.

Looking up at the room on the upper floor, Kim Jong Il asked the husband what were the merits and demerits of the new house.

The latter had been satisfied with their new dwelling, so he could not think of anything bad about it.

He hesitated a while and spoke out: "The new house is very good. It has four rooms in all, and they have double walls. So we are not cold in winter."

His awkward behaviour raised a big laugh.

Seeing a TV set in the room, he asked about the supply of electricity and, moving into the kitchen, was pleased to see its neat appearance and quality utensils. He joked that they were richer than the landlords in the old days.

He walked out and gazed round the dwelling houses nearby.

After a while, he asked the husband if the roof did not leak in the rainy season of this year.

The latter answered no, but he said, nodding his head:

But you can see if the roof leaks or not only after the next rainy season.

Seeing the dwelling houses with gabled roofs built in Korean-style architecture, which were reminiscent of flying cranes, he spoke highly of their various styles and excellent designs and building work.

He called in on another house and took to the road.

He walked ahead of others, enjoying the landscape. Suddenly, he stopped and asked the chairwoman of the farm management board what was the farmers' preferred style.

The latter said in bewilderment that they liked all the styles.

Kim Jong Il asserted:

No, I am sure that they prefer some to others.

The chairwoman gave him a detailed description of the houses in different architectural styles. She said, "That house over there was modelled after the one in Unjong-ri, which is to the liking of the rural-minded. And the urban-minded prefer that two-storey house."

Her concise comparison elicited another burst of laughter.

Kim Jong Il laughed, too.

A Staircase Disappeared

On June 5, 2008, Kim Jong Il visited the Taedongmun Cinema.

He was very happy to see the splendidly renovated cinema. But he stopped in front of a staircase in the lobby leading to the auditorium. He pointed out that it was wrong to connect the lobby and the auditorium with a staircase.

The officials were at a loss.

It was natural, they thought, to set up a staircase as the auditorium was on a higher position.

Kim Jong Il said to them, "**Among the visitors to the cinema there may be many elderly and children. If they miss their footing on the stairs, they may fall down and suffer injuries.**"

The cinema should be laid out also for the convenience of the elderly and children.”

Afterwards, the staircase disappeared to be replaced by a slope way with a gentle gradient.

Good Smell

On January 5, 2009, during his visit to the newly built Wonsan Youth Power Station, Kim Jong Il called in on a newly-wed couple. They had been working at the power station after being discharged from military service.

At the yard of the house he saw five fruit trees and praised them. Seeing the triple-glazed windows in the room, he advised that they should be glued up to keep out cold. In the kitchen he saw many glass bowls and pots, joking that he would let on to the citizens in Pyongyang, who were running short of pots, that there were spare ones in this house. And seeing the photograph they had taken for their wedding ceremony, he jested that he was envious of the many flowers and delicious foods on the table.

Then his eyes reached the balls of fermented soya beans hanging up on the wall of the other room. Thinking that the balls were apparently eyesores in their new house, the officials gave the couple a reproving look.

The husband blushed and his wife dropped her head in embarrassment.

But Kim Jong Il said with a broad smile:

“It is good to see the balls of fermented soya beans hanging on the wall. It is a sight unique in the countryside. This is worthy of a socialist fairyland. In Pyongyang they draw curtains on the walls of their flats. Balls of fermented soya beans are hanging up in this house, which is more pleasant to my eyes. They give out a good smell.”

Petting and soothing the balls, he said: Soya bean paste is efficacious in preventing thrombus and sclerosis of blood vessels in the heart. Mould is generally regarded as a cancer-causing substance, but soya bean paste reduces the risk of cancer. Besides, its ingredients are mostly good for human health. The German doctors, after taking a contrast photography of the coronary arteries of Korean cases, attributed their clean arteries to the Korean custom of eating soya bean paste. In Europe they tend to adopt this dietary habit of our people.

All listened attentively to his lecture on the specialty of the nation.

He resumed:

“A saying goes that a happy man does not really appreciate how happy he is. There are many who do not know how cultured and scientific the Korean nation’s long-standing custom of making soya bean paste is. Those balls on the wall are proof that the wife is very adept at making soya bean paste.”

The young woman was embarrassed.

Frankly speaking, her husband had a better knowledge of it and the balls were his brainchild.

During his inspection tours around the front line Kim Jong Il would encourage the army units to press ahead with soya bean farming. When they were in the army, the husband and his wife had already learned how to make soya bean paste.

Kim Jong Il posed for a photograph with the couple and wished them a happy future.

Noting that they could make soya bean sauce by adding salt, he said that if they made delicious sauce, he would drop by and bring some bottles of it for himself. Before leaving the house, he reiterated that he would come again for the sauce.

2. FASCINATION AND ADMIRATION

Laughter by the Riverside

As part of his field guidance trip around South Hamgyong Province, Kim Jong Il visited the Jangjingang Power Station.

As he was nearing the dam beside generating workshop No. 5, he could see some workers toiling around a tractor by the riverside.

He came up to them and asked what they were doing. One of them answered that they were loading stones to reinforce the dam. He gave a nod and said that they should keep the dam in a good state of maintenance to make it rock-solid and mechanize backbreaking tasks such as stone-sifting.

At that moment someone shouted, "Trout, trout shoals!"

Shoals of trout were ascending the river. A young man crept in and, approaching the fishes, threw himself into the water to catch the biggest one.

There was a splash, and laughter burst out. Soaked to the skin, the man was empty-handed.

He stood a while with a sheepish grin, and threw himself again.

"I caught it!" exclaimed the man, holding up a big trout in his hands.

"The cap is drifting away," another man cried.

Seeing his cap floating away from him, the young man stood dumbfounded. With the trout in his hands, he was scarcely able to follow and pick up the cap.

Watching the scene, Kim Jong Il strode into the water with his shoes on and fetched the cap. He shook water off the cap and put it on the man's head.

Then he joked with a gentle smile that as he caught the fish for him, he saved his cap from drowning.

All split their sides with laughter.

An official reminded Kim Jong Il that it was high time for his departure. It was well past noon.

Saying that the workers would regret at parting with him after having such a pleasant time together, he proposed:

Let's have lunch together.

He took off his wet shoes and socks and put them on a rock. Then he seated himself on a concrete floor and asked his entourage to spread the foods they had brought for lunch.

The workers sat around him.

Saying that he was sorry he should have prepared some more, he divided the slices of bread among them.

The workers felt both awkward and happy.

It was August 7, 1967.

Frames Cut Off

On March 28, 1970, Kim Jong Il was going over the rushes of the Korean feature film *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*. At one scene he had the projector suspended.

Then he pointed out that the scene and the music did not match, and asked the director and the musician why frames were cut off.

They looked in wonder at each other.

He asked them to repeat the scene, but they could not find any discrepancy.

He remarked that they should have discovered the music was a bit slower.

He said, **“I am sure frames were cut off. Find them out.”**

They scavenged through the heaps of frames that were left over after editing.

It took quite a long time to find the frames that were connected with the scene in question.

Twenty four frames were projected per second, so 23 frames were in the blink of an eye.

The following day, Kim Jong Il came to the studio and saw the rushes again.

He said, **“You’ve found them out. You must have taken much trouble. Now the scene is in perfect harmony with the music.”**

Mystery of Headbands

On January 11, 1971, Kim Jong Il visited the Pyongyang Grand Theatre.

As he walked into a room where dancers were practicing, they welcomed him.

He asked for what they were rehearsing. An official answered that the dancers were having a rehearsal for the dance piece *The Snow Is Falling*, and they were agonizing over the mismatch in movements of their hands and feet.

“Mismatch...” reflected Kim Jong Il.

Then he asked them to have another try and sat on a chair nearby.

The dancers repeated the movements.

Suddenly, he called a halt and asked, **“Why are they wearing headbands of different colours?”**

The official stared at them with wide open eyes of astonishment. They were wearing headbands of their own choice.

With a smile on his face Kim Jong Il said: Though they are all in black costumes, dancers do not look identical. It is because they are wearing headbands of different colours. When there was a sports meeting at school, the students of the “red” team wore red

headbands and those of the “white” team, white ones. This is to demonstrate the teams’ strong discipline and solid unity. Dance is an ensemble piece, so dancers should strive to ensure unity of mind and action both on stage and in daily life, particularly during a rehearsal.

He paused a while and went on: Dance is an art of depicting life in keeping with musical rhythms and leaving the audience a deep impression through visual effects in a short span of time. So a trifling disharmony may disrupt a dance piece as a whole. You can make it an ensemble piece only when you achieve unity in both mind and action during a rehearsal and a performance.

Pointing at a dancer, he said that her white headband matched well with her black costume, adding that the red and blue ones did not look good.

Soon after, all the dancers wore white headbands. This brought about a mysterious change; a perfect harmony was achieved in their movements.

Young Calligrapher

On January 12, 1982, a schoolgirl aged 13 was showing her calligraphic skills to President Kim Il Sung and General Kim Jong Il.

She composed herself and began to carefully write a sentence reading “On the occasion of the New Year we wish our fatherly Marshal Kim Il Sung a long life in good health.”

When she finished the sentence, all gave her a warm clap.

Kim Jong Il also clapped his hands.

Seeing the girl beaming with joy, he asked her to write another in smaller letters.

After a brief meditation she decided to express her gratitude to the dear leader Kim Jong Il.

She drew a deep breath and wrote, “Our dear leader...”

Reading the letters, Kim Jong Il stopped her. He said to her quietly, “**No. Don’t write that.**”

The young calligrapher paused a while and went on to write.

Despite his repeated requests, the girl persisted.

But she was compelled to stop midsentence as Kim Jong Il held her writing hand, giving her a pat on the back.

Tears gathered in her eyes as she could not fully express her gratitude to the dear leader.

President Kim Il Sung hugged the pretty calligrapher and posed for a photograph with her.

Visit to China

Depth Charge, Not Mine On June 4, 1983, Kim Jong Il visited the base of the People’s Liberation Army’s North Sea Fleet in Qingdao.

An unexpected thing happened when the captain of a destroyer was giving the visitor a detailed account of the ship’s technical equipment. The Chinese interpreter had great difficulty explaining the electronic hardware such as gauges and equipment in his translation.

Proficient as he was in the Korean language, he was not well versed in military terminology. He often peeped solicitously at his Korean counterpart standing beside him. But the latter was at a loss as he was no more knowledgeable about military hardware.

The same was the case when the captain was explaining the ship’s armament.

The Chinese interpreter stammered, unable to distinguish between a torpedo and a mine.

The officials accompanying Kim Jong Il looked puzzled.

Smiling graciously at the Chinese interpreter, he said, “**This is**

depth charge, not mine. And what we have just seen over there is sound-detection gear.”

Then he explained to his entourage the mission of a destroyer and its armament and, pointing to the vessels of varying sizes on the berth, detailed their weights and missions.

In modern naval engagement submarines that operate underwater are more dangerous than the vessels on the surface, he noted.

He went on: In a flotilla the mission of a destroyer is to attack enemy submarines. The crews of the ship locate a submarine travelling underwater with the help of sound-detection gear, and then fire a depth charge at it.

Debate over *Swallow's Nest* On the same day Kim Jong Il's train left Qingdao for Nanjing.

At mealtime was served a Chinese delicacy called *swallow's nest*. There was a hot debate over the rare dish served for VIPs.

The main ingredient of the dish can be obtained on an island in the southern part of China. A cobblestone island devoid of plants and soil, it is home to swallows of a special breed.

With what the birds build nests on this barren island—this was the subject of the debate, which was attended by both Chinese and Korean officials.

Generally, opinions were twofold: One was that the swallows build nests with their own saliva and the other was that they use the fishes they catch in water.

No side gave in.

Kim Jong Il said he had heard one of his officials say on his return from China that he had seen a fish's eye in the Chinese delicacy.

“You are right. I once discovered a fish's bone in it,” one of his entourage affirmed.

Kim Jong Il and all others laughed at this joke.

The debate resumed in the dining car of the train en route from Shanghai to Beijing.

Kim Jong Il said: I am afraid it's going to be an endless argument. As we are on the last leg of our China tour, we should settle this debate. In my view, the swallows build nests by mixing the fishes with their saliva. I think this may be true and it is a compromise between your different opinions.

Concluding his speech, Kim Jong Il gave an amused laugh.

The officials of the two countries applauded his view, saying:

“Your compromise is right.”

“You have settled our debate over the delicacy.”

Immortal President

On August 11, 1994, about a month after President Kim Il Sung passed away, a banquet was arranged at the Mokran House in honour of Son Won Thae, a Korean compatriot who lived in the US.

The news came as a surprise to all who were still grieving over the greatest loss to the nation.

The following is how the banquet was arranged.

Three years previously, the President invited Son Won Thae to the homeland. Regretting that he had not entertained him on his birthdays, the President promised that as Son's elder brother, he would host a banquet on his 80th birthday.

As the event was drawing near, he prepared a Korean jewel painting *Cranes in a Pine Grove* as a birthday present.

Upon learning the sad news of the President's death, Son rushed to Pyongyang. When he came to pay tribute to the late President, Kim Jong Il, who was standing guard over his bier, greeted him.

Grasping the old mourner's hands, he said:

“Mr. Son, I thank you for coming a long way from an alien land.

“The President said that he would give a large dinner on your 80th birthday, but he passed away, I am sorry to say.

“I want you to visit here again and again, thinking that here is your own home. I will always remember the President’s close friends.”

Some days later, Kim Jong Il summoned some officials concerned and told them that a banquet should be arranged in honour of Son as intended by the President.

On the early morning of the birthday he had a floral basket, a large basket of fruits and his other presents conveyed to Son and his wife, as well as his congratulations for the occasion. In the evening they received the President’s present and were invited to the banquet at the Mokran House.

Also present there were senior government officials, Son’s children and friends, and overseas compatriots.

The old man said tearfully at the banquet, “The President is alive as his intentions are upheld and his warm affection is still felt. I have not believed in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but I have no doubt that the President is immortal. General Kim Jong Il is one and the same as President Kim Il Sung.”

Admiration of Umalatova

Chairwoman of the Peace and Unity Party of Russia Sazhy Umalatova was an energetic politician with a strong sense of justice.

On February 19, 1999, Kim Jong Il met the Russian figure at the foot of Mt. Paektu in the northern part of the country.

That day it was freezing outside.

He walked out of his lodgings to greet the guest and apologized

for making her travel such a long distance. She congratulated Kim Jong Il on his birthday, though belatedly, and said that she witnessed things were going more briskly in his country than the previous year.

Now the Korean people are striving to solve everything in the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance under the slogan of building a thriving country, he noted, adding that they were concentrating efforts on potato farming to ease the strain on food. He reminded her that the former Soviet Union had defeated Hitler-led fascist Germany as it had averted famine thanks to the large-scale potato cultivation in Siberia.

The chairwoman expressed her views on the activities of her party and other Russian parties. Kim Jong Il listened attentively to her.

In talking about life he joked intermittently, but was vehement in his denunciation of the US and its vassal states that were hell-bent on blockading and suffocating the DPRK.

He stated: I never forgive anyone who looks down on our country or tries to impair its dignity. To fight them death-defyingly until they surrender is my conviction and will. I advanced a slogan *No one in the world can match a man ready to risk his life*, and the US, disheartened by this fighting spirit, dares not provoke us. I am determined to fight the US to the end if it dares attack our country. Poorly armed as it was, the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, headquartered in Mt. Paektu, defeated its formidable enemy on the strength of its indomitable revolutionary spirit. As we are possessed of the revolutionary spirit of Paektu, we do not fear any strong enemy.

After three hours of talking, Kim Jong Il proposed to pose for a photograph with the Russian guest against the background of snow-covered Mt. Paektu. They strode out into the howling blizzard, which was blasting drifts of white snow all around.

Noting that he was accustomed to the biting cold in the

mountain, Kim Jong Il said that those who would visit it for the first time might feel very cold. You will feel freezing if you hug yourself against the cold, he remarked. He said with a laugh that one could test one's courage in Mt. Paektu.

Then he urged the guest to pose for a photograph.

On the way back after her parting with Kim Jong Il, the chairwoman said to a Korean official, "The respected Comrade Kim Jong Il is an outstanding statesman, a brilliant military strategist and a great man sent from Heaven. His spirit and faith, his will and courage are all reminiscent of Mt. Paektu."

Friendship Is Fostered through Frequent Visits

Luncheon on the Sea There was a Russian figure who would frequent the DPRK. Hailing from Siberia, he worked in his native region as first secretary of a provincial committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before taking an important post at its Central Committee. He was a long-serving politician, magnanimous and audacious.

On August 2, 1999, when the Russian guest was staying at a resort off the East Sea of Korea, Kim Jong Il arranged a luncheon in his honour on a sailing boat.

He had summoned an official concerned the day before and said: During the guest's previous visit I promised that I would have a rest with him next time, but I could not spare time to do so because of the tight schedule for my field inspection trip. He would be very sorry if he should go back without seeing me this time.

Then he ordered the official to prepare a luncheon on a boat at the seaside resort the following morning.

The official consulted the weather station, which forecasted heavy rain and strong wind for the morning. But Kim Jong Il dug

his heels in, saying that a luncheon on a stormy sea would be an unforgettable memory.

The Russian guest was deeply moved by the story.

Kim Jong Il said to him on the boat: I am sorry that though I looked forward to seeing you during your current visit, I could not afford time because of the tight schedule. It seemed to me that there would be no more opportunity if I did not meet you today. So I arranged a luncheon in your honour despite the foul weather. I wish this would leave a good impression on you. Drinking may be more enjoyable in such weather.

When he took out a bottle of cognac, the guest exclaimed in wonder, "Isn't that Georgian cognac?"

The host said with a friendly smile, **"This is what you sent me last time. It would be no fun to drink it alone, so I kept it to share with you when you come again. Let's drink it together to celebrate our meeting."**

He opened the bottle and filled a cup for the guest.

The latter did not imagine that Kim Jong Il was keeping the cognac until then.

The host said to the hesitant guest, **"Why? I have heard that the Siberian people drink on both happy and sad days. Cheers."**

Visit Pyongyang Freely Kim Jong Il met the Russian figure again. Their talks lasted several hours. The following is an excerpt from their talks.

Kim Jong Il: The Siberian people prefer high-proof vodka. Strong liquor is a health hazard. If you like strong liquor, I will give you some bottles of Snake Liquor, a Korean specialty, when you go back home.

Guest: Thank you, respected Comrade Kim Jong Il.

Kim Jong Il: Promise me that next time you will bring your wife and all other members of your family with you.

Guest: I am obliged to you, but ...

Kim Jong Il: Then I can taste the dishes cooked by your wife. I will give generous marks for them, so you don't need to worry. Be sure to come with her.

Guest: I don't worry about the marks, but all of my family will make a platoon. You know I am too old to be a platoon leader. I will bring some of them.

Kim Jong Il: You seem to think that it might be a burden on us. Even a company would do as all of you are friendly guests. I assure you that they will be entertained well. I will have air tickets sent to you. What is the hobby of your wife?

Guest: She likes reading and opera.

Kim Jong Il: In Pyongyang you can enjoy revolutionary operas such as *The Sea of Blood* and *The Flower Girl*, as well as performances given by the Pochonbo Electronic Ensemble. The admission price is higher for friendly guests than for unwelcome ones. Don't you mind it?

All laughed at this joke.

"I am afraid I am taking up too much of your time," the guest said apologetically.

The host said that he was all right and he could make up the loss of time. He continued that he should visit Pyongyang freely, taking it as his own hometown, and stressed that friendship would be fostered through frequent visits.

"Thank you. Sure enough, I will come again," said the Russian figure.

Lesson Drawn after Boasting

On September 14, 1999, Kim Jong Il visited Janggang Army-People Youth Power Station No. 3.

He said with a delighted look that the power project was

bringing many benefits—generating electricity, adding beauty to the landscape and providing favourable conditions for raising fish.

He asked a county official what species of fish were in the river.

The latter said proudly that it was teeming with carps, goldfish, silver carps and rainbow trout.

He seemed to be boasting of his mountainous county rich in fish resources.

Other officials nodded in agreement at one another.

But Kim Jong Il looked dubiously at the official. Saying to himself that there were carps, goldfish, silver carps and rainbow trout in the river in front of the farm, he wondered about the temperature of the water.

The official could say nothing. He did not know the temperature, nor did he understand why Kim Jong Il was skeptical about his remark.

The same was true of other officials.

Reading their minds, Kim Jong Il explained, **“Rainbow trout grow well in water of 10 to 12°C.”**

After he left the farm, the officials surveyed the river out of curiosity, only to find no trace of rainbow trout there.

Carps, goldfish and silver carps grow in water of 24 to 30°C, so they cannot co-exist with rainbow trout.

“Debt” Paid

Mun Myong Ja, a Korean journalist resident in the US, is widely known in the Western world as being most familiar with the DPRK.

With a three-decade stint as a member of the White House press corps, she has met many renowned figures of the world. A famous women’s magazine of Japan included the celebrity in

the list of Top Twelve Women Who Can Shape the World.

In the spring of 1995 when the focus of world attention was on the possible presidential election in the DPRK after Kim Il Sung's death, the journalist published an article *Inheritance of Presidency on the Upcoming October 10*.

She confessed later: Would it be possible to leave the presidency of a country vacant for more than one year? I predicted on the basis of my intuitive judgment that there would be inheritance of power within the year. My article turned out to be utterly incorrect. The interregnum lasted three years, leading up to the abolition of presidency. Kim Il Sung was declared the only President of the DPRK.

She was astonished by the subsequent news that the Kumsusan Assembly Hall was renamed the Kumsusan Memorial Palace and the DPRK's artificial satellite achieved orbit.

She set out on a journey to the DPRK with a strong urge to see Kim Jong Il.

On July 13, 1997, while on his field guidance trip in Hamhung, Kim Jong Il learned that the renowned journalist visited the country to attend the memorial service to be held on the third anniversary of Kim Il Sung's death. In reply to her repeated requests for an interview, he sent a letter to her.

He wrote in the letter:

“I want to find time and have talks with you during your current visit. I am very sorry that because of several affairs awaiting my attention, I have no time to spare.”

I still remember the President saying in an interview with you that it is a pride of our nation to have such a renowned journalist as you, who is engaging in patriotic activities outside the country with a pen of justice, he stressed. He continued that he had heard a lot about her positive activities for the interests of the country and people and for Korea's reunification even after the President's death. He expressed his hope that he would see her during her next visit.

Three years later, when she was visiting the country again, Kim Jong Il met her.

Seeing the woman in traditional Korean clothes, he said that she looked much younger.

He continued, **“I have felt ‘indebted’ to you as I promised that I would meet you. So I have found time to pay the ‘debt.’”**

That day he had long talks with her giving answers to her questions, and arranged a luncheon in her honour.

Later the journalist wrote in an article:

“Chairman Kim Jong Il was strong yet unassuming. He was one and the same as President Kim Il Sung whom I had met in 1992 and 1993.”

Anecdotes during the Inter-Korean Summit Meeting

President Kim Dae Jung visited Pyongyang from June 13 to 15, 2000 for an inter-Korean summit meeting.

The momentous days in the nation’s history witnessed a number of anecdotes.

Photograph Taken Twice On June 13, Kim Jong Il received the south Korean president and his entourage at the airport and, together with the guests, headed for the Paekhwawon Guest House.

As a token of their meeting in Pyongyang, they had a photograph taken with Kim Jong Il standing between Kim Dae Jung and his wife, a position offered by the couple in deference to the host.

Then Kim Jong Il proposed to pose for another and now with Kim Dae Jung in the middle.

Frankly speaking, the latter’s entourage was afraid that the first photograph might be a blot on their president’s reputation and,

back in south Korea, would prompt bashing from captious conservatives.

Feeling gratitude to the host for his considerate proposal, they were reminded of his greetings to Kim Dae Jung at the airport—I appreciate you for taking a hard, apprehensive journey with your ministers.

They came to realize how thoughtful Kim Jong Il was for their mingled feelings.

To Answer the Question of Global Concern The first round of talks between Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae Jung was held at the Paekhwawon Guest House immediately after the photography session, which was unprecedented in diplomatic history.

All present looked strained as the summit was the first of its kind in the nation's history, held after decades of acute political and military confrontations following Korea's liberation in 1945.

As if to enliven the mood, Kim Jong Il quoted the morning report that his counterpart had taken bean-sprout soup and half of a soft-boiled egg for breakfast, and said, **“I thought that he must be taking light breakfast to have big lunch in Pyongyang.”**

All burst out laughing.

Seeing happy smiles on their faces, he resumed that the people in the north were extending a hearty welcome to Kim Dae Jung on his arrival at Pyongyang. Last time we assured the visiting envoy from the south that President Kim Dae Jung would not be disappointed if he visited Pyongyang, he noted, stressing that in appreciation of the hard journey he had made, the north side would accord the guest hospitable treatment, not in words but in practice.

He went on: The world is watching us now. They wonder why President Kim intended to visit Pyongyang and I accepted his request for the visit. Let us give an answer to this question of global concern in three days and two nights through unceremonious talks.

It is known worldwide that the summit talks proceeded smoothly, resulting in prompt agreement on core issues.

Separated Family On the 14th Kim Dae Jung arranged at the Mokran House a banquet in honour of Kim Jong Il in return for the one hosted by the latter. Just as the banquet was starting, Kim Jong Il noticed that Kim Dae Jung's wife was not around. He asked where she was. A minister from the south answered that she was sitting at another table. Kim Jong Il commented that the banquet seemed to be creating another separated family, and asked, **“How come we can separate another family when we are hoping to solve the problem of separated families?”**

Kim Dae Jung and his entourage wondered what he meant. Kim Jong Il said jokingly: I can see no reason why the President and his wife should not be seated at the same table; I do not think the separation will contribute to raising their appetite; if we create another separated family out of the “First Family” it will make a real scandal.

Laughter burst out in the banquet hall. Thus the First Lady of south Korea was urged to come to the table where Kim Dae Jung was sitting. With a smile on his face Kim Jong Il offered her a seat beside her husband.

She extended her gratitude to Kim Jong Il, saying: Your meticulous concern quite overwhelms me; thanks to your concern, my family has been reunited; although I am sitting beside my husband, my heart is with you.

With a hearty laugh, Kim Jong Il said: It will not do; both your body and your heart should be with your husband, otherwise you will pay dearly.

His remarks triggered another fit of laughter among those present.

Clapping her hands, she said: You are so amusing; you speak in such an engaging way that the attention of everyone is on you.

“Fee for Acting” When the banquet reached a crescendo, an official handed Kim Jong Il the draft joint declaration that had been worked out in consultation with the south side.

Expressing his satisfaction with the document, he told the official to hand it over to Kim Dae Jung. Kim Dae Jung voiced his agreement and said that in his opinion the joint declaration should be made public right away.

Accepting his request, Kim Jong Il went to the platform with Kim Dae Jung and took his hand in his own and raised it.

Then he said, **“I declare the conclusion of the historic north-south joint declaration.”**

A storm of cheers and clapping swept the banquet hall.

At that time the south Korean journalists were desperate as they missed the golden chance of photographing the occasion. So they importuned the senior presidential information secretary to ask Kim Jong Il to pose for them. He told Kim Jong Il what they wanted.

The latter said: Do you want me to play an actor? I can accept the request, but you need also to ask for President Kim’s consent.

Kim Dae Jung said to them that if Kim Jong Il had accepted their request, he would follow suit.

With a hearty laugh, Kim Jong Il said to his counterpart, **“Then let us play actors once again.”**

He went to the platform again with Kim Dae Jung and posed for a picture to be taken of them hand in hand.

The cameramen vied with one another to take the picture.

When the photography session was over, he joked to the journalists that they ought to pay for their acting, causing another ripple of laughter.

“The Same Family” On the 15th Kim Jong Il gave a farewell luncheon in honour of Kim Dae Jung and his entourage on behalf of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK.

The previous evening he had told his counterpart that the

following day he was arranging a luncheon in return for the banquet given by the south side. Noting that he had heard the south was advocating reciprocity, he said that the north was going to follow suit. All laughed at this joke.

The luncheon was proceeding in an amicable atmosphere, when Kim Dae Jung asked Kim Jong Il where his family hailed from. With a gentle smile on his face, Kim Jong Il answered that they hailed originally from Jonju.

Kim Dae Jung regretfully said that his family hailed from Kimhae, and that Kim Jong Il's was from an original root in Jolla Province.

At this moment Ri Hui Ho, Kim Dae Jung's wife, who had been listening to them attentively, said proudly that her family, too, hailed from Jonju.

Kim Jong Il, with a hearty laugh, said to Ri, **“So we are really of the same family. Now the family members have been reunited.”**

Kim Dae Jung and his wife looked perplexed while everyone present split their sides laughing.

Although a rumour had already been widespread in south Korea that Kim Jong Il's family hailed from Jonju, it was the first time that the rumour was proved to be true.

With this as a momentum, the grave of the ancestor of the Jonju Kims, which is located on Mt. Moak, Kui Sub-county, Wanju County, North Jolla Province in south Korea, became famous. It was reported that many people went there to pay tribute to the memory of the ancestor every day.

Cooperation for the Benefit of One's Own Nation The farewell luncheon was proceeding affably.

Kim Jong Il had talks with the guests on several subjects. He pointed out that in order to promote mutual confidence and unity and hasten the reunification of Korea, both sides should refrain from slandering and provoking each other. Noting that ten days

later it was June 25 (the anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean war), he said that both sides should not stoke hostility towards each other on this occasion.

He told the ministers of the south side that they were the very men who should keep up President Kim's and his reputations. Then he said jokingly, **"If you fail to do so, I will have all of you deposed and go to Seoul to take your offices concurrently."**

All laughed merrily.

The ministers pledged that they would do their best to implement the joint declaration.

Kim Dae Jung, too, told Kim Jong Il that he was right and he did not need to worry about it.

As the luncheon was drawing to a close, Kim Jong Il said to the ministers: This time President Kim and other politicians of the south side have done a great thing in Pyongyang. We should make ex-politicians in the south feel regretful for what they did. We are assuming the national duty of implementing the north-south joint declaration. We must not make haste impatiently but solve problems one by one. We should always prioritize the interests of our nation. The north is not indiscriminately opposed to the south Korean authorities' cooperation with other countries. The point is that we should cooperate with other countries on condition of promoting national reconciliation and unity. We should not allow any international cooperation to impair our national interests. We should promote cooperation for the benefit of our own nation.

In the Far East of Russia

The following happened in August 2002 during Kim Jong Il's visit to the Russian Far East.

"Weren't They Out of Job?"

On the 21st Kim Jong Il

visited the Gagarin Komsomolsk-on-Amur Aircraft Complex.

Given its important role in developing latest aviation technology and munitions industry of the country, the modern aircraft giant had been kept off limits to ordinary citizens and foreigners.

Seeing the range of products displayed in chronological order, Kim Jong Il gave the officials in his company a brief explanation of the planes that distinguished themselves in the Second World War and others that were similar to those driven by the Korean pilots during the Fatherland Liberation War.

Then he asked an official of the complex in detail about the performance and specifications of the latest models, and praised it for its substantial contributions to strengthening the country's defence capability and updating its flight service.

The general director of the complex guided the guest to the shop floor, which had been kept out of bounds to outsiders.

At the chamber for designing, the first process of manufacturing, Kim Jong Il watched some designers working with computers. The general director said that there had been hundreds of designers in this chamber but the advent of computer led to a radical drop in the number.

Kim Jong Il asked, smiling genially:

Then what about those numerous designers who were made redundant? Weren't they out of job?

The Russians grinned broadly.

The general director answered, "They learned skills in other fields and found job in places of their own choice. Thank you, respected Comrade Kim Jong Il, for caring about our designers."

Excellent "Scouts" On the 22nd Kim Jong Il visited the Volochayev Division of the Far East Military District.

He looked round the combat history museum and saw the combat and technological equipment.

Then he went to the mess hall, saying that a rich diet was important for the young soldiers.

He also left an autograph in praise of the Division.

The commander presented a stonecraft inscribed with the photographic image of an Ussuri tiger as a gift to the guest.

By coincidence, the gift offered by the Korean delegation was a painting of a Korean tiger.

As “Korean tiger” was to be given in return for “Ussuri tiger,” the gifts seemed to be losing their significance.

Both sides looked sorry that their sincere efforts to prepare the gifts were coming to naught.

In trying to lighten the mood, Kim Jong Il said:

Our “scouts” did a good job as they advised on an exchange of “tigers.” We have already known what your gift is.

The joke gave rise to a burst of laughter.

At the Close of a Luncheon

It happened on May 20, 2011, when Kim Jong Il was paying a visit to China.

A luncheon was arranged on a tourist boat in Lake Jingbo.

As it was drawing to a close, a folk art troupe from Mudanjiang performed Chinese and Korean songs.

Kim Jong Il clapped the performers and, pointing at a woman playing *cheng*, a Chinese board zither, asked a Chinese official what were the clips that were fixed on her fingernails.

“They are called *daimaojia*, made of the shell of a tortoise that occurs in a tropical sea.”

It is *daimaojia*. So you mean the days have gone when the stringed instruments were plucked with fingernails. Thank you for performing many good songs for me.

Kim Jong Il was beaming, and an official from Heilongjiang

Province asked him if he would not mind listening to another famous Chinese music played with *cheng*.

Though time is pressing, I would like to listen if it is a famous song of China.

As the guest agreed, the Chinese official was overjoyed, and he motioned to the musician.

The peculiar sound of the instrument was so amazing.

Listening to the first few bars of the tune, Kim Jong Il said that it was not a Chinese one.

This remark came as a great surprise to both Chinese and Korean officials, as well as the artistes.

With a smile on his face, Kim Jong Il said:

This is a famous song of Britain.

“I thought it was a Chinese one,” admitted the official, feeling himself blush and marvelling at his broad knowledge of music.

3. DEVOTION

“The Paleolithic Issue in Need of Further Study!”

Days after his enrolment at Kim Il Sung University, Kim Jong Il attended a lecture on the primitive society of Korea.

The lecturer dwelt only with the New Stone Age, as it was an established belief in the academic circles that the Old Stone Age had not existed in Korea.

Kim Jong Il was in doubt.

Already in his senior middle school years, he had burnt the midnight oil delving into this tricky issue and holding debates with his fellow students.

He could no longer allow this issue to remain a moot point.

He made a jotting in his notebook, **“The Paleolithic issue in need of further study!”**

On September 29, 1960, several days afterwards, a debate was held on primitive society, where the topic under contention was the Paleolithic issue.

Despite heated discussions no one produced a definite answer.

Noting that the topic was very important, Kim Jong Il said: To have a correct understanding of Korea’s Old Stone Age, we must approach this issue from a Juche-oriented position. Now there are some archaeologists who argue that the Old Stone Age did not exist in Korea just because no relevant relics had been discovered. This is indeed a wrong view without scientific and theoretical grounds. ...

During Japanese rule, servile scholars, taking advantage of the fact that no Paleolithic artifacts had yet been discovered, contended

that the Old Stone Age had not existed in Korea and it had not had any resident inhabitants in that age. This was a prefabricated frame-up to prove the “inferiority” of the Korean nation. It cannot be asserted that the Old Stone Age did not exist in Korea just because no relevant relics had been discovered. Paleolithic relics have been unearthed in large quantities in different parts of East Asia, many of which are geographically close to where our ancestors lived. These relics are proof positive that mankind lived in the regions adjacent to Korea during the Old Stone Age. That’s why we should approach the issue of Korea’s Old Stone Age from a standpoint that mankind lived in our country from olden times though Paleolithic relics have not been unearthed until now. ...

Stressing the need to trace to the servile attitude of some historians for the failure to discover Paleolithic relics, he reiterated that it was important to look at the issue from a Juche-oriented position.

He concluded, “This is the only way to find Paleolithic relics and remains and have a scientific understanding of Korea’s Old Stone Age.”

His hypothesis created a great stir among the archaeologists at the Academy of Social Sciences, as well as the teaching staff of the faculty and the university. It won deep sympathy from the archaeologists of international renown, who held a number of symposiums on this issue and dispatched study teams to various localities in search of Paleolithic relics.

In 1963, relics from the Middle Paleolithic were discovered for the first time at the then Kulpho-ri, Sonbong County, North Hamgyong Province. Some years later, relics from the Lower Paleolithic were excavated inside the Komunmoru Cave in the then Sangwon County, Pyongyang. Similar relics, such as fossil bones of Paleolithic men, were dug up in succession in the Sungnisan Cave in Tokchon, South Phyongan Province, in Ryokpho District, Pyongyang, and in other places of the country.

Enemy of Korean Swellfish

On May 23, 1964, Kim Jong Il and some officials were angling for fish at a reservoir.

They made a good catch of swellfish and other species.

Swellfish was unfamiliar to a woman official.

Slightly touched, the fish made a queer, scraping sound, its belly bulging and distended.

Kim Jong Il asked the curious woman if it was her first experience with swellfish as she hailed from a mountainous village.

“You are right, sir. This strange fish is squeaking,” said the woman.

Kim Jong Il smiled and asked other officials to tell her a story about the fish if they knew any.

But there was nobody who could say anything about it.

The woman grew more intrigued and begged him.

He agreed, **“Then I have no other choice. If you are so eager to know it, I will tell you one.”**

He began recounting a tale: The fish’s original name was *pokaji* in Korean. With the passage of time it was called *pogaji* as it sounded. It became widely known after Japan’s occupation of Korea. The Japanese imperialists robbed the country of its good species of fish. One day, some Japs saw this strange fish and kicked it. As if in a fit of anger, the fish shrieked and its belly swelled. Thinking that it was cursing them, they stamped on the poor creature. Later whenever they saw swellfish, they trampled them to death. After all, the Japs became the enemy of Korean swellfish. ...

The story raised a big laugh.

Kim Jong Il resumed that they should know there was a philosophy in this story—Culprits are always in the grip of

uneasiness. A thief eschews publicity as his nerves are constantly on edge, and he is often scared by natural phenomena, he stressed.

He noted that the tale about swellfish was set in the days when the Korean people's struggle against the Japanese imperialists was at its height.

Then he continued: The swellfish could not be so intelligent to recognize the Japs and understand what they were saying. It was absurd to think that the fish was railing at them. The paranoid aggressors mistook its squeaking sound for cursing.

Kim Jong Il said with a hearty laugh that during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle it was the Japanese imperialists themselves who spread the many legendary tales to the effect that the Japanese soldiers would shudder at the sight of unusual natural phenomena, for fear of being attacked by Commander Kim Il Sung's guerrilla units.

Miserable Lot of the *Pueblo*

The situation on the Korean peninsula was brought to the brink of war in the wake of the *Pueblo* incident.

On February 2, 1968, in his talks with the officials concerned, Kim Jong Il stressed the need to make full preparations for coping with the desperate moves of the US imperialists.

He said: The US imperialists are hell-bent on unleashing another war like a thief who cries "Stop thief!" Owing to their reckless manoeuvres, Korea is in a hair-trigger situation which may lead to the outbreak of war at any time. The revisionists, for fear of the possible war, warned us of the serious consequences of the incident and advised us to release the ship.

He stated, **"This is to say that we should make a concession to the US imperialists. We will never do so. A concession to them means submission and surrender."**

He went on: The *Pueblo* was in our territorial waters, not in the sea off the US, when it was captured in the act of espionage by our sailors. So it makes no sense that we should back down and curry favour with the US imperialists. Our attitude and stand towards them are clear and steadfast. Those who intruded into our territorial waters and committed acts of espionage in violation of the sovereignty of the DPRK, must be punished by our law. This is an inviolable sovereign right of our country. ...

If the US imperialists attempt to “retaliate” for no justifiable reason instead of apologizing for its wrongdoings, Korea would retaliate against their “retaliation” and return all-out war for their “all-out war” as declared by President Kim Il Sung, he asserted.

In December 1968 the US made a formal apology to the DPRK government, and the crew members of its spy ship were deported from the country.

On February 5, 1995, Kim Jong Il, during an inspection of a naval unit of the Korean People’s Army, saw the *Pueblo* in the port. He listened to the officers explaining how they were looking after the ship. Then he told them not to leave the ship in the port, but move it to the site on the Taedong River where the US aggressor ship *General Sherman* had sunk.

He continued in the following vein: If the US spy ship is moved to that site, it will be conducive to exposing the US history of aggression against our country—the US invaded Korea more than 100 years ago, with its aggressor ship *General Sherman* sailing up the Taedong River in 1866 and committing acts of plunder before being sunk by our people, and its armed spy ship *Pueblo* was captured in 1968 while conducting acts of espionage; it will also be effective in educating our soldiers and students in the anti-US spirit.

He emphasized, **“Our people have not seen the *Pueblo* though they heard about it. It is utterly useless to leave the ship in a military port.”**

Noting that the port was out of bounds, he gave detailed instructions on how to tow the ship from the port to the Taedong River. And so, nearly 30 years after its capture, the US spy ship was towed to the river.

System of Dance Notation

Dance notation was a pending issue in the arts that evolved along with mankind.

Works of other art forms were recorded by various means such as score and libretto. As yet there was no good method of notating dance pieces.

Kim Jong Il charged some choreographers with finding a solution to this issue.

After several years of intensive research they developed a notation system, which was not satisfactory enough to represent elaborate steps and movements.

On September 21, 1973, Kim Jong Il said in his talks with the creators and artistes of the Mansudae Art Troupe: Many people comment that the new notation system is incomprehensible, so it has no practical value. Such a poor system should not be handed down to posterity. If we fail to formulate a scientific system of dance notation, the dance pieces such as *The Snow Is Falling*, *Azaleas of the Homeland*, *Rich Harvest of Apples* and *Winnowing Dance*, which we produced with so much effort, will not be preserved for future generations. It will remain a disgrace in history. ...

The system of dance notation should be completed in the era of the Workers' Party. This is a historic task that we should carry out with credit. It is a firm conviction of revolutionaries that they can do what they are determined to do. We have an arsenal of People's Artistes and creators, who have been trained under the Party's care.

It will not do to assign the task to only a few experts. It is necessary to organize a large team of competent experts and enlist their collective wisdom. Then they will perfect the system of dance notation in a short period. Worldwide, there were many attempts at it, and we should resolve this issue for the benefit of our younger generations and mankind as a whole. We cannot leave a will to the coming generations, to the effect that we have not developed a perfect system of dance notation and they should make it without fail. ...

He said jokingly that if the People's and Merited Artistes could not make it, he would tackle the task himself after learning choreography for half a year with a textbook for the correspondence course.

Soon was formed a large research team.

Kim Jong Il guided the team with scrupulous care, taking steps to examine the research results by scientific methods and rectify even trifling drawbacks.

At last the system of dance notation saw the light of day.

It was made public in the form of book and scientific film, and won plaudits when it was submitted to the Secretariat of UNESCO in Paris.

Competition on Rice Fields

On October 6, 1974, President Kim Il Sung visited the Chongsan Plain where rice harvesting was in full swing.

Standing on the ridge between the paddies, he saw the rice plants swaying. After a while, he asked the chairwoman of the management board what was the estimated yield per hectare.

Her answer pleased him very much. The President said that they had good farming and praised the farmers for their remarkable success.

Then he asked again when they could finish harvesting.

Preoccupied with the urgency of the task, the chairwoman replied without proper calculation that they would finish it by October 10, the anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea.

“October 10. I believe you,” said the President.

That night, after seeing him off, the chairwoman sat alone and fell into deep thought, calculating the plots to be harvested and finding it impossible to complete the task in the remaining four days.

She grew so anxious and, learning the news, the farmers were also worried about the possibility.

Suddenly, a convoy of trucks, with their headlights on, was seen rolling along the road near the entrance to the village, where she was sitting.

Dumbfounded, she sidestepped from the road. The truck at the head of the convoy halted in front of her. Someone jumped off it, calling her. She recognized the official working in the field of art, one of the many who often came there to help the farmers.

The latter said that Kim Jong Il had instructed them to go and help her.

Then he explained how they were coming in such a hurry. Noting that the chairwoman of the Chongsan Cooperative Farm management board assured the President her farm would wrap up rice harvesting by October 10, Kim Jong Il said in a worried voice that the task would be beyond the farmers and other people who were there to help them.

He continued:

“It is advisable to move up the date of the sports meeting between the art sector and the press sector, which is slated for the day after tomorrow, to tomorrow and designate rice-harvesting at the Chongsan Cooperative Farm as the first event for the meeting.

“All the players and cheerers must take part in the harvesting competition.”

He appointed referees and set the rules for the competition—all the units must take scrupulous care not to waste a single ear of rice and any careless unit will be disqualified from attending the next event.

Accordingly, harvesting on the Chongsan Plain was added on top of the list of events for the sports meeting and the convoy of trucks carrying the players and cheerers rushed to the venue of the competition.

The rice-harvesting was completed by the set date.

Cement Coming from Nowhere

On December 28, 1974, during his visit to the Hwasan Cooperative Farm in Sinchon County, Kim Jong Il saw a shed at its animal-raising workteam. The previous year he had visited the farm and ordered that a new shed be built instead of the old one. True to his instruction the farmers pulled down the old shed and put up a new one. But the building was covered with a thatch roof.

Kim Jong Il asked the chairman of the management board, who was an old acquaintance of his, **“Chairman, is this the new shed?”**

“Yes,” answered the old man in a somewhat awkward voice.

Kim Jong Il pointed out that stockbreeding had to be one of the major concerns at the farm and they should build far better sheds, adding that the building should have been covered with a tile roof.

Some days after his visit, an unexpected news came from the nearby railway station—a freight car of cement totalling 60 tons, allotted for the farm’s use, arrived at the station.

All the farmers were puzzled as there was no one who was out to obtain cement. But to them, it was like an oasis in a desert.

In fact, the new shed was an earth-and-wood building. They had been so guilty for not showing Kim Jong Il a fine cement building because the material was not available there.

It was not clear where the cement came from, but the farmers could not sit idle as the freight at the station was said to be obviously for their use. So they decided to bring the cement and use it in building a shed.

From then on, talking about the cement from an unknown source became the order of the day in the village.

It was long afterwards that the villagers heard the story behind the mystery cement. On the day when he was at the farm, Kim Jong Il presumed that the earth-and-wood building would last only a few years. So he ordered the officials concerned to send a freight car of cement to the farm without disclosing its source.

Sheer Fools

On August 9, 1979, Kim Jong Il was examining some imported equipment for physiotherapy.

After watching them one by one, he said to the officials: You should not use them immediately for treatment. Before anything else, you should make a close study of their technical specifications. Then you should employ those which suit the constitution of our people and discard those which do not. There are quite a few instances where serious consequences arose after hastily adopting things imported from abroad for their reputation.

Kim Jong Il asked an official what people would call those who blindly worship others' things.

“They are called sycophants,” answered the official.

Again he asked what the sycophants were.

The official was struck dumb.

Kim Jong Il said smilingly, **“Sycophants are sheer fools.”**

“Arsenal in the Forest”

On July 2, 1986, when Kwangbok Street was under construction, Kim Jong Il was going over a document in his office.

“It is a huge sum,” he cried with a serious look.

He brushed aside the paper, which contained a list of equipment and materials to be imported for the construction projects in the run-up to the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students. Every project demanded a few items but the combined total for the 260-odd projects was exorbitant.

Kim Jong Il began to pace back and forth as the official, who was summoned by him, was impatiently waiting for his decision. After a while, with a smile on his face, he began to relate an anecdote about an arsenal in the forest he had heard from President Kim Il Sung.

It happened during the anti-Japanese struggle, when Kim Il Sung moved the base of his revolutionary activities to the area along the Tuman River. One day he learned that the Korean revolutionaries in Jiandao sent an appeal to the Soviet Union for assistance in building a grenade factory. But they received no answer, positive or negative. He told them that there was no one who could build a grenade factory for them without compensation. He stressed that they should make grenades on their own and win victory in the Korean revolution by relying on their own efforts. Then he had a smithy set up in Macun valley. This was the birthplace of Yongil bomb, which the Japanese soldiers were so dreadful of. It was later called Macun Arsenal or Xiaowangqing Arsenal.

Kim Jong Il finished the story, adding: Telling me this anecdote, the President taught that I must not forget about the Yongil bomb but work in the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance until we achieve final victory in the Korean revolution. The story

comes into my mind whenever officials ask for something without thinking of solving everything on the principle of self-reliance.

A couple of days later, he went out to see the national exhibition of technological innovations presented by the three-revolution teams, together with the officials in the sectors related to construction in Pyongyang.

The exhibits were all made by domestic resources. They included many of the items in the above list for the construction projects.

Looking round the hall, the officials reflected on their wrong view and became convinced that there was no need to import all necessary equipment and materials. To their surprise, however, Kim Jong Il said that he would have the total amount of forex disbursed for the projects as they requested.

Then he asked them, **“How would you spend the money?”**

An official replied that it would be good to produce the items within reach of domestic capabilities and expend the fund for importing those which were beyond them right now.

Kim Jong Il asserted that he was theoretically opposed to importing the equipment, fittings and fixtures for the ongoing projects, and he would readily agree to spending the money in building bases for producing them.

He said, **“Even in case we have to import things for construction, it is advisable to buy the equipment and materials necessary for setting up bases that would produce building materials. It is no use importing building materials for domestic consumption without setting up bases of our own. In the course of the current large projects we should build at least one base for making building materials, or we would have ourselves blamed for being empty-handed after the completion of the projects.”**

The officials vowed that they would spend the money in laying solid foundations for pushing forward any grand construction project without depending on other countries.

Kim Jong Il beamed, **“You are right. We should have plenty of ‘arsenals in the forest’ to press ahead with construction projects.”**

Beautiful Cavern

On March 26, 1996, Kim Jong Il visited the Ryongmun Cavern which was laid out as a resort for the people.

Greeted by the officials of the management office, he said that he was there to look round the beautiful cavern.

It was inaugurated some days ago but at many different spots along the tourist’s course, paths were wet with water dripping from the ceiling.

An official told Kim Jong Il what it was like in the cavern, but the visitor insisted on going in, saying that it would not be the same as above ground. After briefing him about the layout of the cavern, the docent led him into the underground palace.

When they arrived at Ryongmun Square, the last leg of the course, the docent told the guest that the square had a floor space of 3 600m². Admiring the view of the large square, the latter said that nobody would imagine it before he saw it with his own eyes.

Suddenly, he asked if it was the end of the course.

An official answered in the affirmative, adding that there were some more sections hardly accessible.

He asked wistfully, **“How many wings are there in the Ryongmun Cavern?”**

“It has two major sections and more than 30 wings,” answered the official.

With a nod of his head, Kim Jong Il said that he had been sorry to hear it was the end of the course but now he felt at ease.

He continued: Academically speaking, caverns fall into two

categories—one with numerous wings and the other without. World-famous caverns belong to the first category. Today, looking round the Ryongmun Cavern, I have found it very interesting to see the many wings and shafts of an unfathomable depth at different scenic spots. In a foreign country the vastness of a cavern was revealed through a long survey of its numerous wings. I am sure that this cavern would be as large. Such a jumble of tunnels and shafts is proof positive of more wings.

He said, **“You say that the survey of the Ryongmun Cavern is not over and it is uncertain where its end points lie. It is necessary to enlist the experts in the field of geological prospecting to carry on the survey and draw up a plan for developing the cavern all round.”**

Then he asked an official about his impressions of the cavern. The latter said that he would like to see it again and again as it was so marvellous. Kim Jong Il commented that it must be a world-class cavern as it was adored by the official who had seen many scenic sites in different countries.

He said, **“The officials in the field of foreign affairs have not seen such a cavern, so they think wondrously of the caverns in other countries.”**

Now some people prefer to talk about mountains and caves in foreign countries as they do not know about such a wonderful cavern in their own country, he said, adding that this was attributable to their lack of patriotism.

There are two famous caverns in the world. They have scenic spots at intervals of hundreds of metres or even dozens of kilometres and lack myriad-shaped objects that are up to world standard.

The Ryongmun Cavern, however, has concentrations of scenic spots and all of the 11 limestone objects set by international standards, and its history is very long. Its world-class square and waterfall in particular arouse great interest.

Kim Jong Il said that these features should be brought home to the visitors by way of comparison so as to implant national pride and patriotism in their minds.

Hours later, when walking out of the cavern, he stressed that it should be immediately opened to the people and they, who were on the Arduous March, would be greatly encouraged.

He said, **“I was told that there have been at least 10 000 visitors to the Ryongmun Cavern so far and a lot more ought to visit here. Then they will realize how beautiful and glorious our country is and keep a passionate love for it deep in their hearts.”**

Photograph to Be Taken with Soldiers

On May 1, 1997, Kim Jong Il visited Mt. Kuwol, one of the celebrated mountains in Korea. In autumn the previous year he had been there to inspect the project for developing the mountain into a fine resort.

The project was still underway and the roads were rough beyond expression.

Climbing up the mountain, he inquired about the details concerned—how much progress was made in building the tourist roads, how many people visited the mountain these days, what means of transport they used, how they were spending their days, etc.

Then he asked about the sources of water, which had been one of his concerns during his first visit to the mountain. He had assigned the soldiers with discovering the sources of water, noting that Mt. Kuwol would be on a par with Mt. Kumgang except the scarcity of water and that however beautiful the scenery might be, it would be both unpleasant to tour the mountain and difficult to run the lodgings for holidaymakers, if water was not easily available.

The officer in charge of the project reported, pointing on a map, about the sources of water they had found in seven valleys.

Kim Jong Il said with delight: Now you see that in our country there is no place without water. So during my visit last year I gave you the task of finding water in the mountain as I believed that there is water in it. You must have taken much trouble to carry out the task.

On his way back from Sahwang Peak, he asked pointing at a building under construction, **“What is that?”**

“It is a pavilion that overlooks the Three Brothers Falls and the surrounding area,” answered the officer.

Overjoyed, Kim Jong Il asked where the waterfall was and if he could lead him there.

The officer said that he could not go there because there was no road.

Kim Jong Il was very sorry to hear it.

Noting that the road leading to the waterfall should be built well for visitors’ convenience, he said, **“It is important to lay the tourist roads quickly.”**

He continued that they should make a careful survey of scenic areas and valleys with streams to discover more beauty spots and places for mountaineering. He also pointed out the necessity of building pavilions where the visitors could enjoy the beautiful scenery and of discovering more sources of drinking water.

At the valley near the Ryongyon Falls, he said that the quality of water should be examined and measures taken, if necessary, to purify it for the visiting tourists.

The sun was going down.

The officials asked him to pose for a photograph with them against the background of the beautiful waterfall.

He noted that it was not good to do so at the construction site where the soldiers were struggling to complete the project.

I will come again after Mt. Kuwol turns into a splendid cultural

resort for the people and pose for a photograph with the soldiers, he said.

A Blot in the Nation's History

On September 23, 1997, Kim Jong Il visited the Woljong Temple in Mt. Kuwol.

Noting that it was quite a large temple with a long history spanning more than a thousand years, he said he was happy to see the old building preserved in its original state.

Suddenly, he halted in front of a Buddhist image and studied it for a long time.

The officials in his company examined it in wonder, only to find a clear scar on its face. Presuming that old images of the Buddha would look all the same, they began to move away.

Kim Jong Il, however, stood rooted to the spot.

The docent began to explain: Originally, there was a gold mole on each of the Buddhist images in Kungnakbo and Myongbu shrines. The Japanese stole them away to leave such scars on them.

All were white with rage.

Kim Jong Il turned his head and looked afar. After a while, repeating that the gold moles on the Buddhist images had been stolen by the Japanese, he uttered in a fury that during their occupation of Korea, they had robbed it of many ancient cultural relics.

He moved along, recalling a report made by an official of the Party Central Committee after his return from a trip to Japan; he had looked round a folklore museum and found that 60 per cent of the exhibits were what had been stolen from Korea.

He stated, **“In the future we must recover all the ancient cultural relics that were stolen from our country by the Japanese.”**

An Hour's Delay

On June 1, 1998, Kim Jong Il was giving field guidance in Jagang Province. After finishing his schedule for the morning, he asked a senior official of the provincial Party committee when the representatives of local workers would arrive in the afternoon to see the artistic performance to be given by the State Merited Chorus and the art troupes of army units.

“As you instructed yesterday, I arranged for the major factories and enterprises in the province to select representatives of their workers and send them here. But some are ...” the official trailed off.

There was a reason for his hesitancy.

Making the rounds of the province, Kim Jong Il had instructed that the State Merited Chorus and the art troupes of army units should stage a joint performance to encourage the local workers who should lead the country on the Arduous March.

The performance was slated to begin at 3 p.m. that day in a house of culture at an industrial complex in Huichon. The official calculated time and was afraid that those workers, who were coming from afar, would not arrive on time.

Looking at the man in anxiety, Kim Jong Il asked the reason. He got a reply and pondered over something for a moment.

The official regretted having told him about the workers on the way, as it did not seem to him that the absence of those workers was such a serious matter. In trying to console Kim Jong Il he said that he would have the performance begin on schedule. But the former advised him to put it off until 4 p.m. if he was certain that the workers would not be there before 3 p.m.

The official was worried that an hour's delay might disrupt his schedule for the afternoon.

But Kim Jong Il insisted, “It is no use staging the performance in the absence of the workers as it is given in congratulation of the working class who created the Kanggye spirit and the work attitude of the people in Jagang Province. My schedule is tight but we must wait and have the performance begin when all the workers are present.”

The official thanked him time and again.

The Army Starts the Ball Rolling

In the summer of 1998, playing basketball was all the rage in the country. The political officers of the Korean People’s Army visited the schools in the areas where they were stationed, taking basketballs with them.

The officers told the teaching staff at the schools that the basketballs had been sent by Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il and urged them to improve the basketball skills of the students.

Seeing the teachers in a daze, the officers told them the following story:

On August 27 that year, in his talks with the commanding officers of the KPA, Kim Jong Il said that he would have 100 000 basketballs sent to the army units for distribution among the schools across the country.

This order dumbfounded the officers. Playing basketball was catching on in those days and basketballs were in growing demand. Good basketballs would attract covetous stares of adults and children alike, so it was clear that the latter would be outmanoeuvred in the scramble for basketballs.

The officers assumed that in order to prevent the possible “loss” in the course of distribution, the Supreme Commander was ordering them to convey the basketballs directly to the schoolchildren.

Kim Jong Il explained to them: I myself can have the basketballs sent to the schools, but I decided to assign the army officers with this task because it will help towards bettering the army-people relations. The company political instructors and others of different ranks in the army should visit the schools in the areas where they are stationed and convey the basketballs with due ceremony. Thus they should make it a good opportunity in promoting our school-our post movement and improving the army-people relations. ...

Upon receiving a report that the army had conveyed the basketballs to the schools as he had ordered, Kim Jong Il said in a pleased voice, **“The army has started the ball rolling this year to better its relations with the people, and next is the people’s turn.”**

This was not a simple expression of praise. The army started the ball rolling—this was a meaningful instruction that the army should be the first to develop the ennobling trait of army-people unity.

“It Is Not Free”

On October 1, 1998, after learning about potato farming at the Taehongdan County Combined Farm, Kim Jong Il visited the Potato Research Institute of the farm.

While looking round the research institute, he asked the local officials if the county had a base for producing compound microbial fertilizer.

A senior official of the county replied that they were experimenting on the fertilizer but had difficulties because of lack of technicians.

“Is that so?” said Kim Jong Il, lost in deep thought. After a while he told an official from Pyongyang that as the county was

experimenting on the fertilizer, assistance should be given to it in getting over the difficulties caused by lack of technicians. Then he instructed the official to deliver to the county the equipment of a compound microbial fertilizer factory to be imported from a foreign country.

He also told the local official that the county should perfect methods of growing potatoes by applying manure and compound microbial fertilizer.

The latter thanked him, beside himself with joy.

Kim Jong Il said with a poker face, **“It is not free. You shall pay for it with the corresponding amount of potatoes.”**

He gave a loud laugh, and the officials joined in the laughter.

“Palace of Pigs”

The following happened on October 20, 1998, when Kim Jong Il was looking round the Huichon Hotel.

Briefed on the meritorious work of its officials and employees, he spoke highly of them for having achieved a lot during the Arduous March.

When he was back from the vegetable fields, the manageress requested him to see the pigsty No. 2 of a unique design.

Kim Jong Il accepted, **“I will go and see it as the manageress has requested.”**

He moved along, but his entourage blocked his way advising against his going into the pigsty with a nasty smell.

He insisted, saying that he did not mind the smell.

He studied the structure of the pigsty, listening to the explanations of the manageress: It is a greenhouse-style, PVC sheeting-covered house for piglets. Vegetable patches are installed on the pens, purifying air and preventing the piglets from contracting pneumonia. They grow well in the warm place, which is always

clean because the faeces are removed through underground channels.

Kim Jong Il praised the innovative idea.

Gazing round the officials, he said, **“The pigsty is very clean. It looks like a palace of pigs.”**

Demonstrate to the World

Kim Jong Il visited the State Academy of Sciences on January 11, 1999.

On the way to the main building of an electronic engineering research institute, he asked an official, **“What family are the computers here?”**

The official wavered over how to answer this question, thinking that he had to explain a long time by comparing different families of computers.

Finally, he answered that they were SUN computers.

Kim Jong Il exclaimed, **“Ah, they are SUN computers. I see.”**

Arriving at a lab, he watched the computers carefully and halted in front of a computer with a set of design applications.

He asked the operator, **“What is the program capacity of this computer?”**

Given the answer, he said, **“The program capacity is four gigabyte, so the free space will be the remaining four gigabyte.”**

He moved to another desk where a young scientist was sitting at a computer. He was very glad to learn that the scientist had interpreted a high-level program of a developed nation and adapted it to his research goals.

He told the young man, **“Let me see the program on the computer screen.”**

The latter hesitated in confusion and Kim Jong Il told him to relax and open the menu.

Now the young man was relieved a little and moved the cursor to open the menu.

Kim Jong Il said:

“Find the license.”

...

“And then the source.”

...

The scientist operated the computer as he asked.

Kim Jong Il bent over and studied the screen. He told the man to split the window so as to display the source program and the interpreted program simultaneously.

The operator displayed the programs as he wanted.

Scanning through the lines, he said, **“Scroll.”**

The operator scrolled down to open another window.

After a long while, Kim Jong Il said giving the young man a pat on the back, **“You have done a great thing.”**

It took long hours for him to make the rounds of several research institutes and laboratories.

As he was getting into his car for departure, a senior official of the academy called him.

Still holding the door-handle, he turned back. He smiled at the murmuring official, as if to urge him to speak out.

The official screwed up his courage and asked him, “Well, don’t you mind if we regard this visit to our academy as the first leg of your field guidance trip for the New Year?”

“I don’t mind, but why do you ask me that?”

“We are going to demonstrate to the world that you visited our academy as the first leg of your field guidance trip for this year.”

Kim Jong Il said with a laugh:

“You say you are going to demonstrate to the world that I visited your academy as the first leg of my field guidance trip for the New Year; you may do as you want.”

Tenor with a Lean Face

On January 11, 1999, after seeing a performance given by the State Merited Chorus, Kim Jong Il was giving the officials advice on their creative work for the future.

Suddenly he said to them, **“By the way, I have found that some singers of the chorus were absent.”**

An official told him that the singer, who had played the Party cell chief in the revolutionary opera *A True Daughter of the Party*, was absent as he had been sent to hospital for medical treatment.

Kim Jong Il said, **“I know that. I mean the singer with a lean face was absent, who had been in the second row of the tenor section.”**

The official pondered over who he might be, and he couldn't remember his face. Other officials, too, racked their brains but in vain.

Afterwards, they tried to find the tenor in the chorus. But none of the tenors had a lean face. All faces looked inappropriate to the characteristics of the tenor part—round, broad or long but not lean.

Some days later, while inquiring about the new recruits to the chorus, Kim Jong Il asked the officials about a singer.

One of them said that he had been transferred to another art troupe.

“What is his name?” asked Kim Jong Il.

The official told his name.

“He is the very man who was in the second row of the tenor section of the chorus,” said Kim Jong Il.

All officials were surprised. They pictured to themselves the face of the tenor, which was obviously lean.

Sonnyo Peak

This happened on August 30, 1999, when Kim Jong Il was looking round a fish farm.

An official of the farm was giving him an account of the geological features of the area around the ponds, when he indicated a mountain called Sonnyo (Fairy) Peak.

“Why is it called Sonnyo Peak?” the visitor asked out of curiosity.

The official answered, “According to an old legend, fairies in heaven would descend on the peak to have a bath in the crystal-clear spring here.”

To his surprise, Kim Jong Il made a loud laugh. He asked the dumbfounded official where the fairies would undress themselves in the mountain with no trees to hide them.

All burst out into laughter, but it lasted only a moment. They realized that his humorous remark was tantamount to a reproach for not giving due attention to tree-planting. They should have covered the area with trees to preserve the picturesque scenery of the peak, lest they should disgrace the name given to it by their forefathers.

The officials stood reticent, feeling a pang of guilt for the barren landscape.

Kim Jong Il said to them: I can see trees planted around the new ponds. They are small in number and, worse still, the surrounding mountains are bald. So the scenery of the fish farm is not beautiful. You should plant many trees in the compound of the fish farm and the mountains around it, so as to make this area clothed in greenery.

“Pumped-up Bean Paste”

On October 28, 1999, Kim Jong Il told officials that he would guide them to another wonderful place.

Their destination was a condiment factory.

In trying to evaluate the quality of bean paste gushing out, Kim Jong Il asked a girl worker, **“What do you think of this bean paste of the factory, compared with the one made in your house?”**

Flushing crimson, the girl answered in a cheerful voice that the product of her factory had a far better taste than the home-made bean paste.

“So it tastes better,” Kim Jong Il said with a laugh.

Other workers and the officials in his company laughed with joy.

Gazing round the officials, Kim Jong Il asked, **“Why do you think it is called bean paste?”**

They were perplexed by his abrupt question.

Silence reigned for a good while.

Kim Jong Il said that the answer was too simple to be thought up and continued, **“It is called bean paste because it is pasty.”**

Laughter burst out again.

Noting that bean paste should be thick, he said, **“But the bean paste produced so far is too thin to eat by dipping garlic into it.”**

The officials could not stop laughing, as he noted that the bean paste was so watery and some soldiers called it “pumped-up bean paste.”

Now the officials were plunged in deep thought as they were seeing the General beaming at the delicious bean paste from the new factory, recalling the painful memory of the sobriquet invented by some witty soldiers.

“Aren’t You Tired after Working at This Job All Day Long?”

On January 28, 2000, during his visit to a bearing factory, Kim Jong Il was on the shop floor watching a girl assembler distributing metal balls.

After a long while, he said to her, **“Let me have a try at the ball distribution.”**

The officials, as well as the girl, were perplexed. He picked up the greasy balls immediately before being dissuaded from the attempt.

A preparatory process for assembling ball bearings, the job consisted in evenly distributing balls between the outer and inner races.

He fumbled with the races but could not put the balls rightly.

“It is not so easy,” he smiled.

He told an official to have a try, who ended up failing after repeated attempts. Other officials followed suit, all rolling up their sleeves, but the result was the same. One of them was struggling with a firm grasp on the races, bringing a good laugh.

Looking at the officials with a smile, Kim Jong Il said that it would not be so easy as it seemed.

He said to the girl, **“Will you help me with it?”**

The worker was hastily wiping her greasy hands. Kim Jong Il urged her on, noting that he would not mind them.

Now his hands mingled with hers. With deft fingers the worker distributed the balls in the blink of an eye.

Kim Jong Il exclaimed, **“How skilful you are. The balls are magical.”**

He continued to ask in a gentle voice, **“Aren’t you tired after working at this job all day long?”**

“No, I am not. I have already been accustomed to this job,” answered the girl.

Stroking her arms, Kim Jong Il said that it was not simply a matter of skill and however dexterous she might be, she must have great pains in her arms in the evening after a daylong work.

He said to the officials: As you see, our workers do not complain about hard jobs. They demand more work for them and

uninterrupted power supply to their factory, saying that they would not mind lights going off in their houses. Our officials should be proud of having such workers and strive to better their living conditions.

A Worker's "Protest"

On August 31, 2000, Kim Jong Il visited the Songgan Forestry Station in a remote mountainous region.

Going all the way round the workers' village, power station, bathhouse and funfair, he rejoiced at the picturesque scenery.

Hearing of his visit belatedly, the villagers rushed in an avalanche to see him.

An old worker elbowed his way through the crowd towards where his car was. Having run on a slippery road in the rainy season of the year, the car was splashed with mud.

Tears rolling down his cheeks, the old man wiped away the dirt with his sleeves.

An official in Kim Jong Il's company tried to hold him back, saying that his coat got dirty and the car had a long distance to cover.

The worker protested, "We workers cannot bear to see the General's car splattered with mud. I myself don't mind my coat stained with it. As we all know, he has defended our motherland by dint of his Songun-based leadership and is now making painstaking efforts over rugged mountains to pave the way for the prosperity of our people. It is a unanimous desire of our workers to lay a silk carpet on the roads to be traversed by the General."

He even scratched the mud off the car wheels and then disappeared quietly into the crowd.

That evening, listening to the official's story, Kim Jong Il was moved to tears.

He said, **“I am very grateful to the worker. It would be hard to find such a good people as ours in the world.”**

He stressed that he was greatly remorseful to see the people who were supporting him with all sincerity as he was not providing them with everything necessary, adding that the officials, together with him, should make redoubled efforts to build a paradise for them as soon as possible.

Feat of the Soldiers

On August 26, 2001, some days after his trip to a foreign country, Kim Jong Il went to see Ullim Falls which had been discovered by the soldiers of the Korean People’s Army.

Hoarse Voice He was greeted at the entrance to Ullim Pass by the officers in charge of the construction.

He praised them for having made tireless efforts to build a road there and discover a beauty spot after completing the construction of a pleasure ground in Mt. Kuwol. He stood arms akimbo surveying the broad road meandering towards Ullim Pass. He admired the view, saying that although in the rugged mountains, the road was quite wide and its slope and curve were not sharp.

An officer began, pointing on a map, to give him details about road construction and development of the scenic spot.

Listening to all that he had to say, Kim Jong Il asked, **“Why is your voice hoarse?”**

The question puzzled the officer, who mumbled that he was born with such a voice.

The officials accompanying the General agreed that there were some born with a husky voice.

Kim Jong Il said:

“Officials should learn to distinguish a husky voice from a hoarse one.

“You are speaking in a raspy tone because you have a sore throat from overwork. You have to take good care of your throat.”

The officer thanked him, teary-eyed.

Thanks of the Supreme Commander That day Kim Jong Il said that he was satisfied with the beautiful scenery of the new road and the valley adjacent to Ullim Falls. He continued that he was so much pleased to see another splendid resort laid out through the devoted efforts of the soldiers, creators of happiness for the people.

He went on, **“The discovery of Ullim Falls is another great feat performed in the Songun era by our People’s Army who are infinitely loyal to the Party and revolution, the country and people. The country and people will always remember the heroic feat of the soldiers who discovered the waterfall in the primeval forest and developed the area into a fine cultural resort for the people.”**

He said: The valley was craggy and hardly accessible. In old days there were temples and priests at most of the sights and beauty spots in our country. But there is no trace of them here. According to an old record, Abbot Sosan, the famous monk in Mt. Myohyang, had been to Mt. Kumgang but he had not been here. The scenic spot that had remained isolated since ancient times was discovered and laid out superbly by the soldier-builders.

An officer said to the General, “Supreme Commander, Abbot Sosan was widely known but it was impossible for him to find easy access to this valley encircled by steep cliffs. The scenic spot saw the light of day because you made a bold decision to build a road here and assigned the task to us. This is

a present that you have prepared entirely for the benefit of the people.”

Still asserting that it was a feat of the soldiers, Kim Jong Il commented: The road was laid in this remote and inaccessible area. The project could be ventured on by nobody but our soldiers who are determined to pick stars from heaven if it were the order of their Supreme Commander. It is no exaggeration to say that the road and the waterfall are a fruition of their lofty ideology. I will do my best for such excellent soldiers. ...

Finally, Kim Jong Il in the name of the Supreme Commander gave thanks to all the officers and men who took part in the projects for road construction and development of the scenic spot.

“You Are Wrong”

Kim Jong Il visited the Sakju Foodstuff Factory on July 19, 2002.

After making the rounds of the production lines, he headed for the exhibition hall. An official of the factory boasted that the soy sauce and bean paste on display were delicious.

“Is that so?” said the visitor, urging the officials in his company to have a taste of them.

They all agreed that the soy sauce and bean paste had a good taste. But one of them said that the bean paste on display had a better taste than that in the line of fermentation.

A senior official of the local province was baffled, wondering if the product was brought from another factory.

Other officials shook their heads in bewilderment.

“You are wrong,” snorted Kim Jong Il.

Pointing at a bowl of bean paste, he said, **“The bean paste you tasted in the line of fermentation has yet to mature and the one**

on display has already matured, so they have different tastes. It is natural that the latter has a more pleasant taste.”

Looking round at the officials of the province, he said with a smile that he would be obliged if they sent him a jar of this bean paste later so that he would make a tasty soup by mixing it with young bok choy.

“Does a Pheasant Live by the Sobaek Stream?”

It happened on October 7, 2002, when Kim Jong Il was looking round Samjiyon Hotel No. 1.

He saw a large landscape painting *Delight by the Sobaek Stream* adorning the wall in the lobby.

He was feasting his eyes on the painting, when the deer and pheasant in it attracted his gaze.

Watching the painting closely, he asked, **“Does a pheasant live by the Sobaek Stream?”**

As a matter of fact, many officials had been there and lauded the art work in the lobby, but nobody wondered if deer and pheasants occurred by the stream.

Noting that the painter might not have been to the area, Kim Jong Il said, **“Moose may live in the Sobaeksu Valley but other species of deer and pheasants do not occur there.”**

Stressing that painters must not distort facts, he told a story: I once saw a painting at an art studio, which depicted the scenery of the Sobaek Stream. In the painting were three mallards, as well as deer and pheasants, so I jokingly asked the painters where the mallards could live away from the stream. ...

The officials broke into laughter.

Afterwards, the deer and pheasant disappeared from the landscape painting.

No Beans on “Gold Mountains”

On October 25, 2002, Kim Jong Il visited the Changsong Foodstuff Factory.

His first question was about the supply of raw materials.

An official answered that the factory was using wild fruits available in Changsong County, such as wild grapes, *omija*, tara vine and hawthorn fruits, adding that they had procured 600 tons of acorns for the year.

Kim Jong Il was satisfied with the reply.

He cast a glance round the factory, when a chart in the yard met his eyes.

He asked, **“What is that chart?”**

Another official said proudly that it was a flow chart showing the lines for production of condiments, noting that they had newly set up a workteam for the purpose.

Kim Jong Il said that he could not understand how the factory was producing condiments, before asking what the workteam was producing.

The official replied that it was producing bean paste, soy sauce and bean oil.

“Where do you get soya beans for the production of bean paste, soy sauce and bean oil?” asked Kim Jong Il.

A senior official of the county answered that some were locally available and 20 tons had been supplied by the province.

It is not wise to set up the lines for production of condiments in such a mountainous region as Changsong County where sufficient supply of soya beans could not be guaranteed, observed Kim Jong Il.

He went on: Changsong County is in a mountainous region with a limited area of arable land. In such counties it would be

difficult, however hard they may try, to ensure enough supply of soya beans for the operation of the above-said production lines. I do not understand what guarantee the factory had in setting up those lines in this county. It does not suit the local conditions of Changsong County to build the production lines fed by soya beans, instead of those which rely on the abundant supply of wild fruits. ...

Kim Jong Il resumed, **“President Kim Il Sung called mountains in Changsong County ‘gold mountains’ because it has an abundance of wild grapes, tara vine fruits, wild pears and other necessary materials to feed local industry factories. There are no beans in the ‘gold mountains.’”**

Ginkgo Tree in Anbul Temple

There is a gigantic ginkgo tree at the Anbul Temple in the valley of Tonghung-ri, Kumya County.

On April 8, 2003, on the road of his Songun-based leadership, Kim Jong Il visited the old temple and saw the ginkgo tree.

The temple, dating back to 516 in the period of Koguryo, had consisted of seven buildings centred on the main building Kungnakbo Shrine. After being burnt down in an accidental fire, it was rebuilt in 1393 and 1843.

Looking round the temple, he pointed out several issues such as sustaining the ancient features of its painting, and underlined the need to observe the principle of fidelity to historical facts in the preservation of cultural relics.

Then he saw the ginkgo tree spreading out branches over the temple.

The custodian explained to him:

“I dare say that this Kumya ginkgo tree is the biggest in the world, 41m high, 15m round at the chest’s height, and

18.2m round and 4.6m across at the roots.”

He continued that according to an old record, the tree had been transplanted there in 516 when the temple had been constructed and, counting from the year, it was more than 1 500 years old. It is written in a book on the history of Tonghung-ri that the tree is 2 000 years old, he added.

So what is the real age of the tree, 1 500 or 2 000?

Inwardly, the custodian wanted the visitor to settle the controversial issue on this occasion.

Kim Jong Il was reading his mind and said with a laugh that he seemed to be asking him to settle the issue but he was not in a position to do so.

He advised, **“You should invite experts in the concerning sector to come here and confirm the real age of the Kumya ginkgo tree.”**

The custodian scratched the back of his head in embarrassment. Kim Jong Il noted that he had seen an old zelkova tree but it was the first time to see such a big ginkgo tree. You said that you wanted to show me this rare tree, and if I had not come today, I would not have seen this novelty, he added.

He asked the custodian about the annual harvest from the tree. The latter answered 300kg. He commented that it was a great amount.

An official reminded him that during the Fatherland Liberation War President Kim Il Sung had dispatched the then Vice-premier of the Cabinet Hong Myong Hui to take measures to protect the tree against the enemy’s heavy bombing.

His face suddenly turned solemn as he was yearning for the President who had valued the treasures of the country.

After a long while, he left the yard of the temple and approached a wooden bridge over a brook. He halted at a short distance from the bridge and turned back. He admired the immense size of the ginkgo tree, noting that it looked more impressive there.

The custodian said, “The tree is so gigantic that it can be seen from four or eight kilometres away. When the tree has green leaves, one cannot see the sky under it.”

Kim Jong Il agreed that it was really a giant and it might be seen from far away.

Then he asked why the information board said that the tree was 1 500 years old though the history book indicated 2 000 years.

The custodian answered that it was written so according to the above-said record.

An official with a long experience of foreign trips said that in his opinion the ginkgo tree was the largest in the world.

Nodding his head affirmatively, Kim Jong Il said, **“If it is written in a history book that this tree is 2 000 years old, I think the information board should say so.”**

He continued that the tree looked as old as indicated in the book.

That day he told officials that a health resort for the local farmers should be laid out near the temple so that they could have a good rest enjoying the fine scenery.

Before taking leave, he said with emphasis, **“It is important to take good care of the Anbul Temple and the Kumya ginkgo tree with a long history.”**

Later it was scientifically proved that the ginkgo tree was 2 120 years old.

Hemp Dress and Woolen Suit

The following happened on November 12, 2006, when Kim Jong Il was looking round the new compressor shop at the Ryongsong Machine Complex.

With a beaming smile on his face he watched the CNC Turning Centre model Kusong 6A. An official of the complex told him that all the operators liked the home-made machines as they were

processing workpieces by means of computer programs. Nodding in agreement, the latter said that it was good to introduce NC devices in the dozens of machines.

The assembly shop was packed with various types of compressors in neat rows. Kim Jong Il inquired in detail about their sizes, types, capacities, applications, operation principles and technical specifications.

Then he moved to an area for sophisticated processing, which had been newly arranged for serial production of new types of compressors. Most of them were high-tech machines, some costing more than a million euros apiece in the international market.

In former days capitalist countries had set up the COCOM to control export of special machines to revolutionary and anti-imperialist countries like ours and, recently, concluded the Wassenaar Arrangement labelling them as dual-use goods, he noted. He added that whatever frantic moves imperialists and their vassal forces might make, their blockade against the country would not last long.

He went on, **“Today I am very happy looking round the Ryongsong Machine Complex. The new compressors are excellent, and it is praiseworthy to have built a compressor shop in a modern fashion. Now the complex seems to be in a woolen suit. It should strive to achieve sustained growth in production. It must never come full circle and look like in a hemp dress.”**

Patriot

On February 6, 2007, Kim Jong Il visited a fish farm in Lake Jangyon.

An official explained the long-term plan of the fish farm to the visitor in front of a panoramic map showing stake nets for raising rainbow trout and a blueprint of the freshwater king crab pond.

He said: Fries will grow for a certain period before being

released into the stake nets and the lake. At this point where the lake joins the sea, a bay is to be formed to raise freshwater king crabs. Later they will grow in Lake Mugye and Lake Tongyon. On the other hand, salmon, gray mullet, dace and trout will be netted on their way upstream to spawn. After collection of their eggs, adult fish will be supplied to the people and the fries hatched out from the eggs will be set free. In a few years they will go upstream to be netted again.

Kim Jong Il praised that the plan was unbelievable and asked the official, for a joke, if he was exaggerating.

All gave an amused laugh.

He was beside himself with joy picturing to himself the lake teeming with various fish species.

He made the rounds of the ponds for spawning and hatching, inquiring about the availability of natural food and mud at the lake.

The official told him that the lake abounded with plankton, floating plants, whitebaits and other small fishes, and the mud contained plentiful organic matter.

Kim Jong Il observed: This is indeed a rich source of natural food. Nowhere will be found such a favourable location. It is a brilliant idea to raise fish in stake nets or freely in this lake. The man who brought it up must have bent all his energies to raise fish on natural food.

He said, **“He is a patriot, who racks his brains, suggests bright ideas and works energetically to realize them, so as to improve the people’s living standards by turning to good account the natural and geographical conditions in his native region.”**

Nightmare Hour

On February 24, 2007, there was a rehearsal for the artistic performance *The Blue Sky over My Country (Dawn)*.

That evening Kim Jong Il summoned an official who had officiated at the rehearsal and asked him about the result.

The latter replied that it was successful.

Kim Jong Il said that the creative workers must have taken much trouble to make adjustments to the performance in a few days, and then asked when the rehearsal began.

“It began at 11 a.m. and ended at noon,” answered the official.

Kim Jong Il asked in surprise, **“You mean the rehearsal was held in the morning?”**

The official stood dumbfounded, whom he reproached for having poor knowledge of vocal music.

He said, **“To vocalists 11 a.m. is the worst hour. They say they can’t sing well in the morning even after three hours’ vocalizing. So they call it a nightmare hour.”**

The phrase sounded strange to the official, who had already known that morning hours were less favourable for singers than afternoon hours. He was not aware that 11 a.m. was such an awful hour for vocalists.

Noting that artistic performances are organized in the evening, not in the morning, in foreign countries, Kim Jong Il emphasized that officials in the sector of musical art should be knowledgeable enough. ...

Champions Fear Challengers

On May 4, 2008, Kim Jong Il visited the Kosan Fruit Farm.

Surveying the vast stretches of the orchard from an observation post, he admired the wonderful view and said with delight that it would yield a good harvest every year.

He praised the fact that over the past decade the farmers had prepared the fields for planting dwarf apple trees while raising their saplings by their own efforts. He spoke highly of their tireless

spirit and asked the farm manager to give his regards to the farmers.

The latter thanked him.

Kim Jong Il asked, **“Which unit is the Kosan Fruit Farm competing against?”**

This abrupt question caught other officials off guard, but the manager answered fluently as if he was waiting for the question, “We were informed that during your visit to Kwail County, you said another unit should compete against the county. So we decided that it should be our rival.”

Kim Jong Il remarked that it was a bold decision to compete against the county which was far bigger in terms of orchard area.

He continued, **“Champions fear challengers most. The manager of the farm is a competent, valiant official who is possessed of a revolutionary stamina. Officials should be ambitious and enterprising.”**

He asked the manager if he would compete against the fruit farms in Pukchong County.

“Pukchong is no match for my farm,” bragged the manager.

Kim Jong Il smiled and agreed with his decision to challenge Kwail County.

The manager vowed that he would lead the farm to prevail over the rival.

All laughed joyously.

Kim Jong Il said: As I was passing by here to climb Chol Pass, I used to ponder on how to supply my soldiers and people with more amounts of fruit. I am very glad to see the remarkable changes taking place in the Kosan Fruit Farm to meet the requirements of the new century. I can see that the Party committees of Kangwon Province and Kosan County are assisting the farm in every possible way. I will give help to it myself. I am willing to do so because the officials of the farm have high ambitions and great courage.

At a Goat Farm on the Phyongphung Tableland

Phyongphung denotes *enclosed by mountains*. A large goat farm appeared on this out-of-the-way tableland in Hamju County.

Kim Jong Il visited the goat farm on August 7, 2008.

Towards a Higher Aim After being briefed in front of a panoramic map on the situation of the goat farm, such as its construction, total area, branches and number of goats, Kim Jong Il said in a low, regretful voice that it should have more than 10 000 goats to be called a large farm.

This remark came as a surprise to the officials of the county, who thought that theirs was a large livestock farm—over 20 branches with thousands of goats, milk-processing facility, school, shop and other public and welfare service facilities, plants for producing such dairy products as cheese, curd and yogurt, and grazing course with a total length of 40km.

They had been proud of this farm, which was much larger in the number of goats and output of milk than those in other localities. Furthermore, it was a fruition of their belt-tightening efforts during the Arduous March and forced march.

But Kim Jong Il was not happy with the size of the goat farm.

He was guided to a milk-processing room in Tongbong, a branch farm, which was redolent of milk and there were heaps of cheese, curd and yogurt.

He asked, **“To whom do you supply the dairy products?”**

An official answered that they were supplied to the residents in the township, children at nurseries and kindergartens in particular. He noted that there were piles of cheese in the cellar, adding that people liked curd but not cheese because of its odour.

Kim Jong Il laughed and said: People eat cheese enjoying its

aroma. It is not cheese that is not aromatic. They like cheese in Europe but not yet in our country. It is natural that those in rural communities should not be willing to buy it, as city dwellers dislike it. ...

The officials in his company joined in the laughter.

Kim Jong Il went on, **“It is wrong for the officials in Hamju County to supply the dairy products from the goat farm on the Phyongphung Tableland only to the children at nurseries and kindergartens in the county and other residents in the township. They should bolster up the goat farm so that its products could be provided to all people in the county.”**

Now the officials could understand why he was so sorry to hear the number of goats in the farm.

They contented themselves with supplying the dairy products to the residents in the township, but he was concerned about those in other parts of the county.

Good Idea? Kim Jong Il was led along an 8km-long mountain pass towards the summit 1 000m above sea level.

He was having a bird's-eye view of the goat farm, when the county Party chief broached a proposal that had been suggested by the farmers: Given the increasing output of milk and lack of fuel, horses should be used for transport purposes.

The officials in his company thought that the idea fitted the local conditions of the county.

Kim Jong Il commented, **“The chief secretary of the county Party committee has suggested using horses for the transport of milk as the number of goats and the output of milk increase and the country is running low on fuel. It is a good idea but horse-drawn carts should not be used for the purpose. Milk may degenerate on the way.”**

He pointed out that it was out of the question to drive horse-drawn carts along the grazing course extending dozens of kilometres. He stressed that the milk should be transported by

trucks, adding that necessary vehicles and fuel should be supplied in a planned way.

It was before daybreak that he arrived at the goat farm. Now the sun was rising above the horizon when he made the rounds of a branch school and a shop.

Before his departure Kim Jong Il said to the officials: You should draw up a bold plan to increase the number of goats. You should render a positive contribution to improving the diet of the local people by raising more goats and boosting the output of dairy products. You should also take good care of the farmers who are working with patriotic zeal in the remote mountains to implement the Party's policy.

“You Ought to Say ‘I Sincerely Believe in Amitabha’”

Mt. Ryongak dates back to the Mesozoic era, more than a hundred million years ago. It derived its name from the appearance of the peaks that combine to look like a flying dragon. It has been called “Mt. Kungang in Pyongyang” for its fantastic scenery.

On January 17, 2009, while touring the mountain, Kim Jong Il praised the constructors for developing the area into a resort for the people and indicated ways for laying it out better.

The following happened that day.

The General said in the main temple of the Pobun Hermitage that the interior was spick and span and its painting was exquisite. Watching the image of Amitabha and the white candles flickering on the holders, he advised that according to old practice, yellow candles had been used at Buddhist temples, so white ones should be replaced with yellow ones.

At that time a monk in red robe said that he would recite a prayer as he was honoured to see the General.

Officials were at a loss. But Kim Jong Il smiled and urged him on.

Sounding a wood block, the monk mumbled the formulas which were incomprehensible to the atheists.

It was so boring that one of them nudged the monk to stop.

Kim Jong Il motioned to the official to leave him alone, saying that it was part of Buddhist ritual and they should wait to the end.

The monk finished recitation and laid down the block.

Kim Jong Il asked, **“Have you finished it?”**

“Yes, sir,” answered the monk.

“Before laying down the wood block, you ought to say ‘I sincerely believe in Amitabha,’” reminded the General.

“Oh dear,” sighed the monk. He was in such great excitement that he was confused at the last part of the ritual.

All laughed at the scene.

Kim Jong Il walked out into the yard.

The monk explained that the hermitage consisted of four buildings including the main temple, adding that monks used to read the Buddhist Scripture at the Toksong Temple.

Kim Jong Il responded jokingly, **“Oh, intensive study!”**

Laughter burst out again.

Sturgeons Out to the Sea

On June 21, 2009, Kim Jong Il visited a fish farm, which had been built with so much effort in the period of the Arduous March.

He looked back with deep emotion on the adversities the country had undergone in those years.

Plunged in deep thought for a good while, he said that recently the fish farm switched from rainbow trout to sturgeons. It is a great feat that our country has succeeded in the artificial breeding of sturgeons, he noted, adding that nobody had dreamed of it before.

That day, talking to officers of the army, he broached the subject of sturgeons again.

He underlined that they must succeed in farming sturgeons in the sea at any cost.

He went on: It is my wish to supply our people with sturgeons and salted roes as soon as possible. In the years of the Arduous March our people lived on grassroots because of the scarcity of food. But they stayed on at their workplaces and defended socialism. We should, at all costs and at the earliest date, provide them with good living conditions to be envied by peoples of other countries. ...

Officials reflected on the difficult days of the Arduous March and forced march.

Grassroots, substitute food ...

Catching a glimpse of fresh herbs on the way to the front line, the General would order the chauffeur to pull up as he felt his heart breaking to think of the people who subsisted on the herbs.

Recollecting those days, he said:

What a proud reality it is—the Korean people are catching up with the global standards, releasing sturgeons into the sea. Today, against all odds, we are well on way to attain the goal of a thriving nation. Looking back on the past of trying ordeals, I feel the pride in making revolution and harden my decision to work harder for the good of the people. Everything for the people—this is the fundamental principle in my activities and the aim of my life.

Country Rich in Patriots and Heroes

On September 16, 2009, Kim Jong Il told officials that he had met many excellent officials and hardworking people during his trips for field guidance. Our country is rich in patriots and heroes

and, as I often say, ours is indeed a good people, said the General.

He cast a meaningful glance at the officials for a good while, and then said: Even retired people have taken part in the ongoing 150-day campaign. In Paechon County the locals have turned out to build Ryesonggang Power Station No. 6 by their own efforts. Women also formed a shock brigade to assist in the project. In Hyangsan County, too, housewives formed a shock brigade to work for the project to turn Mt. Myohyang into a resort. They are carrying bags of cement and gravels and sand on their backs to pave the path extending from the mouth of Habiro to Isonnam Falls. This is proof positive that socialism in our country is kept in its original form. The morale of our people is admirable indeed. They follow the Party with absolute loyalty.

He paused and resumed: Officials should always respect the masses and work by relying on them. The Party cannot exist apart from the masses. In the arduous period of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle Commander Kim Il Sung would say to his men that as fish could not live without water, so guerrillas could not live without the people. He had educated them to respect the interests of the people and fight by relying on them. It is easy to abandon a person but it is hard to train him into a good worker. So our Party demands that officials adhere to its line on the masses with a proper attitude towards them. ...

Reiterating the importance of the line on the masses, the General emphasized that this was the only way to work effectively with them, a lesson he had drawn from his long years of leading the revolution and construction.

Kim Jong Il continued:

In my mind's eye, I always see myself being supported at the left by my soldiers, at the right by my people and in the centre by my officials. As the Party's eternal companions, faithful assistants and excellent associates, officials should strive to accomplish the revolutionary cause of Juche that was pioneered on Mt. Paektu.

Photograph Taken after a Lapse of 48 Years

On September 29, 2009, Kim Jong Il visited the Pyongyang Textile Machine Factory, where 48 years previously he had interned as a student at Kim Il Sung University.

The officials of the factory guided him to a stand on which the parts of textile machines were exhibited.

They were high-precision parts, some beyond the processing capacity of an ordinary factory and others which in former days had to be imported from advanced countries. Seeing the exhibits in fine array, the visitor could not believe his eyes and asked in wonder if they were really domestic products.

He exclaimed, **“Excellent. It is a great feat indeed.”**

It was some years ago that the management had decided to set up a new line for producing modern looms as the whole country turned out to build a thriving nation. By modern looms they meant flexible rapier looms, which were acknowledged as the acme of textile machinery.

At first they vacillated because it would cost a colossal sum to import the necessary machines from other countries. Worse still, they were not willing to sell them.

They had no option but to manufacture them by their own efforts. They were confronted with a number of challenges; they had neither designs nor sophisticated processing equipment. In the 1950s, following the end of the Korean war, Korean workers had made tractors and trucks by rubbing the parts manually. Now it was impossible to ensure precision in this way.

Despite repeated failures in the subsequent years, the factory persisted with the effort. Receiving reports on their patriotic endeavour and indefatigable spirit, Kim Jong Il took measures to assist the factory. He arranged for various types of

highly efficient CNC machines to be supplied in sets.

Looking back on those days, the factory officials felt grateful to the General and, throwing a glance around them, he said, **“This factory has made flexible rapier looms on its own and achieved other great feats. Now flexible rapier looms can be manufactured in our country by domestic exertions; this marks a revolutionary change in the development of its textile industry.”**

Kim Jong Il proceeded towards the tool shop.

Recalling the memories 48 years back, he looked round the information room, the changing room and other places that were familiar to him.

He was seeing lathe No. 26, the machine he had handled as a student, when an official said that visitors to the factory had been sorry not to see the photograph of him in his days of internship at the tool shop.

The General said, **“Then let me pose for a photograph in front of the tool shop.”**

Great Man and CNC Technology

Going through the initial stage of manual processing, machine-building industry boomed with the introduction of NC machines based on semiconductor chips. The advent of CNC technology in the latter half of the 1970s has led to radical changes in this sector.

It was early in the 1980s that the Korean scientists and technicians manufactured CNC machine tools, which had been the monopoly of a few developed economies. This marked a milestone in the development of CNC technology in the country.

Officials, however, were not quite familiar with this technology.

It would take long to “enlighten” them as CNC machines were rarely seen or used.

At this juncture Kim Jong Il mapped out a plan for overall application of CNC technology and led the scientists and technicians to push back the frontiers of science and technology.

Among the numerous anecdotes related with the ensuing CNC drive, the following is what happened on October 31, 2009.

Manager’s Confession That day Kim Jong Il was giving on-site guidance at a factory where CNC technology was applied all round.

The factory brought back tearful memories of the Arduous March in the mid-1990s when he had decided, despite acute shortage of funds, to have the whole of the government coffers appropriated for development of CNC technology.

Today CNC machines were in operation on a large area of the factory and an integrated manufacturing system was in place.

The General looked round the shop floor with deep emotion, noting that there were many changes in a couple of years.

After inquiring about such details as precision, defects, efficiency of labour and operation of modern machines, he said, **“Look. What a remarkable contrast the new shop floor is to the old one.”**

At that time the factory manager said to the General, “Today I want to confess something to you. When you visited our factory during the Arduous March, you told me to introduce CNC technology. The term was new to me. But it was your instruction, so I pledged that I would do so. As a matter of fact, I was pitifully ignorant of the technology, so I rushed to get help from the officials of the Ryonha Machine Management Bureau who are specialists in this field.”

“I remember. You are an honest man. I saw you looked in wonder at me when I told you to introduce CNC technology,” the General agreed with a laugh.

The manager resumed, "I asked the officials of the bureau about CNC technology you had mentioned. They gave me a specific explanation. This is how I learned about the technology."

Then he tidied himself and bowed in gratitude to the General.

Other officials, as well as the manager, were close to tears.

Silence reigned for a while.

The General said as if to enliven the mood, **"After all, you have become an excellent manager. Now a song is in vogue. It is about CNC. Would you like to sing it?"**

"I like the song very much."

"You shall sing it next time we meet again."

All erupted into laughter.

A senior official of the provincial Party committee recalled, almost in tears, "Things were so miserable at that time. It was a freezing day in December 1998 when you visited this factory braving a howling snowstorm. Ten years and eleven months have passed since the day, and now the factory is so fabulous. I cannot forget the day."

Now officials were vying to express their feelings: one called the factory the leader in the nationwide drive to modernize production lines by introducing CNC technology; another added that the factory had started from scratch.

The remarks were proud memories of the past that had yet to be recorded in history and statements by the masters of CNC technology.

"Cousin" of CNC Machine On the same day Kim Jong Il visited another factory.

After being greeted by its officials, he proceeded to see the shop floor.

They showed him a self-made machine. It was an improved version of the old model which the General had instructed them to upgrade during his last visit in May nine years back. An official

told him that workers and technicians pooled their energy and wisdom to manufacture the machine.

The General tried to touch a fresh-processed part, when the official warned that it might be hot. Undisturbed, he stroked it and asked in detail about the good points of the machine.

The new model can process parts faster and replace six old machines, explained the official.

He continued that three new machines were in operation, rendering 18 old ones obsolete, and the management had decided to donate the old machines to the state. He added, “We could succeed in making the new model because you helped us widen our horizon and gave advice on the core technology. Our factory will receive orders from other units.”

Kim Jong Il said to the official, **“This is a semi-, and ‘cousin’ of, CNC machine.”**

There was a peel of merry laughter.

“The Former Landlord Will Fall into a Dead Faint”

On November 1, 2009, Kim Jong Il visited the Unhung Cooperative Farm in Thaecheon County, North Phyongan Province.

He recalled that this was his third-time visit and he had been there on a very cold day in January 2000 to see the Handure Plain after the land realignment project was over. He said that in July the previous year he had visited the farm again, adding that new changes took place in the meantime.

He saw rice, corn, potato and other crops on a stall and praised the fact that the farm’s grain output was expected to increase by 60 per cent year-on-year.

The Migok Cooperative Farm in Sariwon and other rivals, which are engaged in the socialist emulation campaign, would feel uneasy if they knew this figure, he joked. He continued that the

remarkable success for the year was attributable to the fact that in response to the Party's policy on bringing about an upsurge in agriculture, the farmers strove to improve the fertility of paddy and dry fields and cultivate crops in a scientific way as required by the Juche farming methods.

He said to the farm officials, **“Everyone will be surprised to see these amazing changes at the Unhung Cooperative Farm. I said, while touring the transformed Handure Plain, that it would be impossible for a former landlord to identify his old land if he came to the plain. Probably, he would fall into a dead faint if he were here.”**

The metaphor brought a smile on everyone's face.

An official of the farm said that the success was a result of the General's wise leadership.

The latter shook his head and commented that it was a precious fruition of the patriotic devotion shown by the officials and farmers there who had endeavoured to implement the Party's agricultural policy. He extended his thanks to all of them for having done good farming and spruced up the village that year.

Patent Product of Jongphyong County

On November 6, 2009, Kim Jong Il visited the newly built Kumjingang Kuchang Youth Power Station in Jongphyong County.

He rejoiced at the view of the vast artificial lake and the dam extending hundreds of metres, saying that in South Hamgyong Province they had done a great thing without giving much publicity. I have witnessed miraculous innovations wherever I go and this year is full of auspicious events, he added.

An official of the province explained that with the completion of the new power project after the construction of Kumjingang

Youth Power Station No. 6, the county's power generation capacity had doubled.

The General commented that it was a great achievement for a county. Noting that man could do what he was determined to do, he said, **“It is man who has the greatest strength and courage.”**

He was guided to a yard in front of the generator room, where a map was put up showing power stations along the Kumjin River.

After being briefed on the completed and ongoing projects, he said: It is necessary to build more power stations in the Kumjin River. The river extends nearly 100km and has three power stations in operation. It would be marvellous if the power generation capacity were increased radically after the construction of Hamhung Youth power stations Nos. 1 and 2. The Kumjin River is an important source of power and I suggest it should be nicknamed the Power River.

That day he also saw the county's special products—balls and briquettes of coal mixed with weathered gneiss and mycoprotein fodder.

He listened attentively to an account of the composition of the coal products and said that it was very interesting and he was pleased to see such a novelty in the county.

Noting that they should be widely used as they would burn easily and generate intense heat, he said, **“The balls of coal mixed with weathered gneiss can be called the patent product of Jongphyong County. The local people may give themselves airs for the invention.”**

Officials grinned at his joke.

The General resumed that by displaying the spirit of devoted service to the people, the officials of the county had made a priceless invention for their daily use through tireless thinking and study, and stressed that all officials should follow suit and become faithful servants of the people.

The officials pledged to serve them better.

“I Will Buy All the Products Here”

On December 16, 2009, Kim Jong Il was looking round the production lines at the Rason Taehung Trading Corporation.

“What is the next?” he asked an official of the corporation.

The latter answered that he would be guided to the pine mushroom liquor shop.

He watched a fermenting tank and then studied the packaging process for a good while. The machines for washing, bottling and capping were rumbling and he said that he was happy to see the automated process though CNC technology had yet to be introduced.

He asked the official, **“How many bottles are there in store now?”**

The official replied 2 000 bottles.

The General inquired in detail about the amount of raw materials, the estimated volume of production, the daily output and the capacity of the fermenting tank.

Then he said, **“I will buy all the products here.”**

He held up a bottle and asked, **“How strong is it?”**

“It is 30%,” answered the official.

The General asked an official in his company to have a taste of it. The latter sipped the liquor and said that it had a characteristic odour of the mushroom.

Kim Jong Il instructed the official of the corporation to transport to Pyongyang all that it had produced during the 150- and 100-day campaigns.

The official said that he would comply, but with a puzzled look.

At that time a provincial official suggested to the General that some bottles be given to the officials in his company.

But he shook his head in disagreement and said it would be better to supply the products to the citizens of Pyongyang. He reiterated that they should be transported to the city with the same trademark on the bottles.

This year is full of auspicious events and commodities have been produced in large quantities during the 150- and 100-day campaigns, he added. He stressed that they should be supplied to the citizens through department stores in Pyongyang, which would be in a festive mood.

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